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The best I remember

George Wood  
March 123

Pat remembers  
so much that is  
of "the best" of  
Jesse Halsey

Oct. 29, 1946





# The Best I Remember

By

Arthur Porritt

(of *The Christian World*)

Author of "The Strategy of Life"



*"A man is about as happy as he  
makes up his mind to be."*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



New York

George H. Doran Company

1923

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## **THE BEST I REMEMBER**





TO MY WIFE



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## PREFACE

THIS book was never deliberately designed. Its genesis was the possession, close at my hand, of a capacious notebook at a moment when, in ill health and weariness of spirit, I needed an indoor recreation to "lay a ghost." My first thought was to jot down a few random recollections of the best things I could remember, but the jottings grew—as Mr. Rudyard Kipling says his first poems grew—unmanneredly, till the first capacious notebook was filled, while memories stored up during thirty-three years of London journalism—especially religious journalism—still crowded in. Other capacious notebooks followed and were filled. Then it seemed possible that these reminiscences, so artlessly garnered, might be made into a book to be published in all modesty, and not without a sense of dread lest aught written here might be thought to have been set down in malice. It is the nature of recollections to be indiscreet; but indiscretions may be neither malicious nor mischievous, especially if they concern things said and done in years that have passed into history. I cherish a hope that I have no enemies (since there is no man I regard as my enemy), and devoutly I wish that this book shall make me none.

A. P.



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# The Best I Remember

## CHAPTER I

C. H. SPURGEON AND S. A. TIPPLE

LOOKING back it is odd to recall—it was prophetic, perhaps, of my thirty years in religious journalism—that my first assignment as a daily newspaper journalist in London was to hear Charles H. Spurgeon preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. I was sent to get a London Letter paragraph for the *Manchester Examiner* about the Baptist preacher's return to his pulpit on the first Sunday in February, 1890, after one of his winter visits to the south of France. My instructions were explicit. "If Spurgeon preaches just a gospel sermon, there is no copy in it. If he says anything about himself, that may make a good paragraph; if he says anything about current questions, give it us in full." I arrived at the Tabernacle very early—having made the journey across London from Upper Holloway by a horse-drawn omnibus—for there were no Tubes in those days. On the steps outside the door of the Tabernacle a man wearing a very long frock-coat held out a collection-box, and gave me to understand that in return for a contribution I should receive an admission ticket for the service. I duly paid toll in silver, and entered the building, to find it already crowded. I recall thinking that I had never seen a building with quite so ugly an interior, and then I remember thinking later that I had never been in any building in which

(though I was badly placed) I could hear so well. Afterwards I made the discovery that it was not due to any peculiar acoustical virtue of the Tabernacle that I heard so perfectly—it was due to Spurgeon's wonderful voice. I remember nothing of that first hearing of Spurgeon beyond the loveliness of his voice. He preached a purely gospel sermon which, I fear, made no deep impression upon me at the time, and he made no reference to himself, or to current questions. So I went away disappointed at the sorry yield of "copy." I had not then learned the journalistic trick of making bricks without straw. The fact that Spurgeon, of whose magical powers I had heard from childhood, had no spell for me when I first heard him, rather concerned me at the time. Later I discovered that this was not an uncommon experience, though perhaps few first hearers of Spurgeon dismissed his preaching, as George Eliot did, as a "most superficial grocer's back-parlour view of Calvinistic Christianity." Still I cannot honestly say that when, on subsequent occasions, I heard Spurgeon, I ever felt, as perhaps I ought to have done, the magic spell of the great preacher. But always that wondrous voice, which was like nothing I have ever heard in any public speaker, charmed my ears. Spurgeon's hard Calvinistic theology repelled me, and his almost fierce joy in picturing a literal hell made me rebellious.

I often wonder whether Spurgeon's strangle-hold on Victorian evangelicalism was not due to his power to terrorize his hearers by the sheer exuberance with which he dangled the unrepentant over the bottomless pit. I am certainly convinced that the disappearance of hell from modern theology explains some of the lost grip of the churches upon the people. Spurgeon's gospel was based on the fear of God; and the fear of God seems to have passed from men's minds to haunt them no more. Possibly the modern milder conception of God is not wholly a gain. A young ministerial acquaintance of mine who, in his



preaching over-emphasized the benevolence of God and under-emphasized His righteousness, was admonished by an old Northumbrian miner in his church for omitting the element of fear from his gospel. "Mr. Roberts," he said, "you can take it from an old man with a long religious experience that a theology without a hell is not worth a damn." Before he died Dr. R. W. Dale sighed and said sadly to a friend, "No one fears God nowadays." The elimination of fear from preaching has, I feel sure, been a tremendous factor in the decline of church-going. There are people whom only fear moves—they do not understand love as a motive power. But now, just when the theologians have nicely reconstructed their theology with hell jettisoned, the spiritualists are reviving the old doctrine. I have heard Sir Oliver Lodge express his belief that the personality of the selfish and evil will persist after physical death, but will exist in a state of isolation and ostracism in the Great Beyond. Could Spurgeon's literal hell be worse?

Whether Mr. Spurgeon would command large congregations if he were preaching now is a question I constantly hear discussed. My own opinion is that he certainly would. With all the decline of the habit and the decay of the sense of the duty of church-going, a really great preacher—whatever his theology, be it broad or narrow, modernist or obscurantist—is sure of a congregation. Thirty years of observation as a Free Church journalist leaves me without a doubt that really fine preaching never fails to attract hearers. It may be true, as Dean Inge declares, that we have almost ceased to be a listening people and become a reading people; but for all that, eloquent preaching that does not insult the intelligence, that appeals to the highest emotions, and that aims at strengthening the will and quickening the conscience, has always an audience awaiting it. The dogmatism of the pulpit has lost authority; but the voice of the preacher

who can preach never cries in the wilderness. The crux of the whole church-going problem is to find a full supply of preachers who do not insult the intelligence—men to whom educated men and women, reading and thinking the thoughts of these spacious days, can listen without losing their self-respect. Preaching is not obsolescent, unless preachers make it so.

I forget in what year it was that I paid my first visit to Central Hill Baptist Church, Upper Norwood, and heard the Rev. Samuel A. Tipple. It was, I think, on the recommendation of Rev. W. Garrett Horder that I went. I fell captive at once to that singular man of genius—incomparably the greatest preacher I have ever heard. Central Hill was a quaint little chapel in a by-road on a level with the roof of the Crystal Palace. The interior was plain to bareness, but few buildings I have been in conveyed such a strange sense of worshipfulness. The long streams of ivy that hung swaying in the breeze outside the dim windows somehow contributed to the reverential spirit within. Mr. Tipple was a veteran when first I came under his spell—a venerable figure with a long white beard, bright little eyes that flashed like a sparrow-hawk's, and an exquisitely modulated voice. His spoken prose always made me think of Wordsworth's poetry. There was cadence and sometimes a rhythmical lilt in his sentences. He was a Wordsworthian Pantheist and emphasized the Immanence of God long before it got into current theology. Literally he saw sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything. The prayers of Mr. Tipple were quite as remarkable as his sermons. A majestic liturgy might be compiled from the one volume of prayers (now, I fear, out of print) which he published, or rather allowed to be published, from shorthand notes taken surreptitiously by a lady admirer. One peculiarity of Mr. Tipple was his objection to being reported. If he saw anyone in the congregation taking



notes he would stop in his sermon, and quietly, but firmly, ask that the notebook should be laid aside—otherwise, he would add, he could not go on preaching. We possess more of Mr. Tipple's prayers than of his sermons because he could not see the note-taker when he prayed. His preaching was altogether out of the ordinary. He seemed to be thinking aloud, quietly beating out the music of his soul in public, as if his congregation were not there. But the exactness of his words and the delicacy of his phrasing, as well as the profundity and subtlety of his thoughts, made it unthinkable that he was extemporizing, and I always felt sure that every sermon he preached had cost him prodigious effort in the quietude of his study. His perfect pronunciation of words was delightful. John Ruskin said he was the greatest master of pulpit prose.

In the days when I occasionally walked over to Upper Norwood, Mr. Tipple was preaching only once a Sunday. Usually the service began about five minutes past eleven. It was timed for eleven o'clock; but the congregation came from all four quarters of London, and the train which brought the West End element from Victoria was often a few minutes late. Mr. Tipple would sit in the pulpit meditating without the slightest movement until the Victoria train contingent streamed in. Then he would begin the service. Central Hill was scarcely a church in the ordinary sense, and I never heard Mr. Tipple say a word that led one to think he was a Baptist. He had a strictly personal following, composed mainly of a professional and well-to-do class of people—and chiefly men—who went in all weathers and often at great personal inconvenience to hear him. I imagine that no other preacher and no other church would have held their loyalty. A larger congregation would probably have destroyed his distinctive style of utterance. The Sunday after Mr. Tipple resigned his ministry, the Central Hill congregation had evaporated into thin air. But he was

a consummate preacher, a man of positive spiritual genius, and a fearless pursuer of truth wheresoever it might lead him. Certainly he belongs to the "immortal dead" who live in minds made better by their presence.

Many years after Mr. Tipple's death I listened, Sunday by Sunday, for a year to a preacher cast in a very similar mould—Rev. Walter Friend, a Congregational minister, who, after a long period of service in South Africa, has returned to England to spend the evening of his days under home skies. Once, in conversation with Mr. Friend, I told him that I saw strong resemblance in his preaching to that of my old idol, S. A. Tipple. "What a very strange thing that you should say that," replied Mr. Friend. "I knew Mr. Tipple very well in my younger days. He was very kind to me. Indeed he asked me to be his co-pastor at Central Hill Church."

## CHAPTER II

### JOURNALISM IN 1890

THE Fleet Street into which I was plunged in 1890 was not, in its externals, very different from Fleet Street to-day. But in its essence it was wholly different. To a prosperous journalist Fleet Street presented then the most expensive half-mile walk in England. The Bohemian tradition, dating from the days when Dr. Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith used to "take a walk down Fleet Street" was beginning to pass away. The Press Association and the Central News had established themselves as news-gathering institutions, and the old penny-a-liners who had lived—somehow—on the proceeds of odd paragraphs picked up in all sorts of promiscuous ways, were finding their livelihoods getting more and more precarious. A few of them, poor dishevelled scallywags, stuck to their guns and even more tenaciously to their taste for spirits. These derelicts made it cheaper for a prosperous journalist to take a hansom cab from Temple Bar to Ludgate Circus rather than face the "stand and deliver" kind of demands for "a couple of shillings" which these decayed "literary gents" made upon their more fortunate confrères.

Phil May, the *Punch* artist, who made a large income but spent it as it came, was buttonholed one day in Fleet Street—so the story goes—by one of these depressed spirits. "You haven't two shillings?" began the mendicant. "Who told you?" replied Phil May.

On another occasion Phil May listened to a piteous story from an out-of-work reporter who had lost his job



through a quarrel with a sub-editor (a sub-editor, perhaps I should explain, is an indoor journalist who prepares news "copy" for press and, because he generally cuts it down, is a reporter's natural enemy). Phil May heard the story through, gave the man half a crown, and then said: "You should have knocked the sub-editor down." "I did," was the reporter's answer. "You did?" ejaculated Phil May, with delight expressed all over his mobile face. "Then here's another half-crown."

The journalistic unfortunate who levies toll on his brethren in the craft survives, I suppose, in Fleet Street; but he is not so conspicuous a figure on the pavement as he was in the early 'nineties. Nor—unless my observation misleads me—are there so many elderly men engaged on newspapers as there were in my early days in Fleet Street. Journalism is a young man's occupation; and I imagine that men who do not make good in "the street of adventure" before middle age, seize any opportunity that occurs to find a niche in some less exacting sphere of life.

In recent years commercial magnates, as well as government departments, have discovered the value of publicity; and, realizing that a well-trained journalist has protean qualities of usefulness, they make raids upon Fleet Street and carry off into their press bureaus a large proportion of the middle-aged men to whom the glamour of the "street" has become faded. Again, many new-comers into Fleet Street enter journalism to keep the pot boiling while they read for the Bar. Others use Fleet Street as a not inconvenient thoroughfare into literature. Sir James Barrie, Mr. Percival Gibbon, Mr. Eden Philpotts, Mr. Arnold Bennett and Mr. Edgar Wallace come to mind at once as men who, in the early 'nineties, were winning experience as journalists that they have since turned to good account as writers of fiction. Sir John Simon and Lord Hewart both courted the "merry jade" of

journalism *en route* to the Attorney-Generalship and the Bench.

When I came into Fleet Street there was no *Daily Mail*. All that that single fact implies it would require a history of modern journalism to expound. Without discussing the tremendous effect that the commercialization of the Press has had upon London journalism and upon English political life, I may say, almost without a qualification, that it has revolutionized the entire profession of journalism, and led to a revaluation of all newspaper values. The whole process, of which Mr. Kennedy Jones boasted, of converting a branch of literature into a branch of commerce has been carried out under my eyes in Fleet Street. The leader-writer is now subordinated to the news editor, and the political expert to the domestic gossip. But whoever suggests that the degeneration of journalism only began when Mr. Alfred Harmsworth (the late Lord Northcliffe) started the *Daily Mail*, labours, I think, under a delusion. The declension began when Mr. T. P. O'Connor started the *Star*. Up to that date the London Press, morning and evening alike, had not merely preserved a certain dignity, but had attempted, with varying measures of success, to serve as educators of the people. The *Echo* (which the *Star* and the *Evening News* killed) always set itself seriously to inform its readers on the questions of the day. It treated politics with gravity and reported Parliament honestly. Whatever views might be expressed in its editorial columns, its news columns contained impartial reports from which readers could frame their own judgments. The *Star* broke this tradition under Mr. T. P. O'Connor. Mr. Alfred Harmsworth went one better with the *Daily Mail*, and the *Mail* beat the *Star* at its own game.

Possibly this revolutionary change in journalism had to come. It arose out of the revolution in our education system in the early 'seventies and the discovery of the



value of women readers to a newspaper. The character of our compulsory elementary education dictates the character of our popular daily Press. With a higher standard of normal education we shall get, I imagine, a higher grade of seriousness in our popular newspapers. No one who realizes how completely the last extension of the franchise has placed the political destinies of England in the hands of the proletariat, and particularly of working-class women, can, I imagine, feel easy as long as the education of the working classes remains on its present level, and as long as our popular daily papers pay such scanty attention to the proceedings in Parliament. I took the trouble once to examine carefully day by day for a month the reports of debates in the House of Commons in the columns of a London daily paper that commands a huge circulation, and I was driven to the conclusion that a working man or woman who read that paper only might live in almost complete ignorance as to what Parliament is and does. If "direct action" ever does become a reality some of the blame for the catastrophe will rest upon the newspapers which, by ignoring, belittling and disparaging the House of Commons (the "Talking shop," they call it), have undermined the authority of Parliament in the eyes of King Demos. Only the Fisher Education Act (now whittled away in the interests of economy) justified the wild leap in the franchise that came in 1916, and only an extension of the elementary education age to at least sixteen (as it obtains in America) will make democracy safe for England. An uneducated democracy will always be liable to be "fooled" by demagogues or stampeded into disastrous courses by appeals to self-interest.

I am always thankful that during my first two years in London I had to spend a great deal of my working-day in and around the House of Commons. It gave me an insight into the machinery of Government that I might have failed to acquire by years of assiduous reading. My

work was never in the gallery of the House of Commons—though I spent many evenings there. What took me to St. Stephens was the reporting of committees of both Houses on private bills. There were Royal Commissions, special departmental inquiries, deputations to Ministers and parliamentary conferences, all of which it was my duty to attend and report. At the time I thought it drudgery, like unto the treadmill, to attend day after day for weeks a Board of Trade inquiry into railway rates conducted by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Sir Courtenay Boyle in 1890-1. Almost every industry in England appeared, through counsel, before that Commission, fighting for railway facilities and fair rates of transport. I learned far more than I imagined about British industries as I sat listening to the evidence of witnesses and the speeches of barristers; and in the thirty intervening years I have often thanked my lucky stars that it fell to my lot to follow that inquiry.

Another Commission that chained me to Westminster for weeks concerned itself with the equitable distribution of the Whisky money (Exchequer Contribution Fund) between the county councils and the county boroughs. The *élite* of the parliamentary Bar were all engaged on that task. I remember the shock I sustained one day when, by chance, I realized how lightly public money is squandered. Sir Richard Webster was representing the Lancashire County Council. All the county boroughs in Lancashire had briefed counsel for the inquiry. The day came when the last of the county boroughs had presented its case with the exception of a small borough represented by a rising young barrister. I was sitting near Sir Richard Webster who, as representing the county council, had to reply to the whole case for the boroughs. As lunch time approached I heard him whisper to the representative of the last small borough: "Keep going until three o'clock, I can't get back till then." At that time the young barrister



had said all he had to say, but obedient to the eminent Queen's Counsel, he reiterated and re-reiterated his whole case, talking laboriously with an eye turned constantly to the door, until at half-past three Sir Richard Webster returned. "Thank you, L——," he said softly as he took his seat; "you've right nobly done your duty." Then the rising young barrister sat down, and Sir Richard Webster opened his reply—only, after speaking for twenty minutes, to suggest an adjournment. The Commission rose, and it being Friday, adjourned till the following Thursday. I do not know what the daily cost of that inquiry really was, but it must have run into thousands of pounds per diem, and I vividly recall my sense of disgust that, when every minute cost so much, a full two hours were wasted to serve the convenience of a distinguished lawyer.

Nowhere—not in Parliament, nor in the Law Courts, nor on any other platform, religious or political, have I heard finer speaking than in the committee rooms of the House of Commons. The leader of the parliamentary Bar, when I first began haunting St. Stephens, was Mr. Samuel Pope, a man of prodigious size, physically, with a choleric temperament and a very red face and nose—all the more remarkable since he was a very ardent teetotaller and temperance advocate. He was an amazingly fluent speaker, and could be persuasively and powerfully eloquent in dealing with the severely technical matters upon which he was briefed. And not even Sir Charles Russell himself was more formidable as a cross-examiner. Mr. Cripps, now Lord Parmoor, was at that time the handsomest man at the parliamentary Bar. His Greek profile always fascinated me as completely as his exquisite courtesy, which, however, cloaked no weakness as an advocate. There were other brilliant advocates at the parliamentary Bar in the early 'nineties—men like Mr. Littler, Mr. Balfour Browne and Mr. Bidder—but my memory clings lovingly to the



figures of Mr. Pope and Mr. Cripps. They were a study in contrasts—Mr. Pope with his explosive vehemence and Mr. Cripps with his imperturbable urbanity. Their methods were as poles asunder; yet somehow I imagine that one was as often on the victorious side as the other. As Lord Parmoor, Mr. Cripps is now one of the most impenitent idealists in the House of Lords and a man who throws his weight into every sound movement for promoting peace and goodwill. The extraordinary quality of mind that makes a man really successful at the parliamentary Bar impressed me greatly thirty years ago, and still impresses me. The giants in the early 'nineties seemed to me to have the whole technique of all the professions and sciences at their fingers' ends.

Fleet Street was somewhat tavern-ridden when first I entered London journalism, and the newspaper men of that time were, I concluded, among the best patrons of the public-houses. The taste for drink was very pronounced among the old reporters with whom I mingled thirty years ago. A total abstainer was rare—almost a curiosity, in fact. In this respect I have seen a steady, cumulative improvement through the years. I do not suggest for a moment that journalists are now wholly immune from the drink temptation; but the standard of sobriety has vastly improved, and one might say now that journalists generally are as abstemious as members of any other profession. In my memories of the early 'nineties I recall quite a number of sorry wrecks who haunted Fleet Street. Some of them were very dilapidated old men; but one of them was a very dignified figure, with a most aristocratic deportment and a fine flowing white beard. He was a penny-a-liner who had once been a leader-writer. One of the ablest journalists in Fleet Street twenty-five years ago was a scholarly man—a Scottish University graduate—who was rarely quite sober, and indeed declared that he could not write intelligibly until after his fifth whisky and soda.

Round about his tenth whisky he coruscated. He died prematurely, with his best music still within him. Another very capable journalist, whose speciality was in ecclesiastical affairs, achieved a great coup when in liquor. He was representing the *Daily Chronicle* at the British Association meetings in 1898 when Louis de Rougemont—whose amazing stories of adventurous explorations in the South Seas had given the *Wide World Magazine* its initial popularity—appeared before the Anthropological Section. De Rougemont had emerged with flying colours from close cross-examination by Sir Edward Brabrook and the secretary of the Geographical Society, and his speech at the British Association was the *bonne-bouche* of the Bristol meetings. The daily papers published extended reports of his story of riding on giant turtles and other fantastic feats of the Munchausen order. The *Daily Chronicle* alone ignored the explorer's amazing achievements—for the simple reason that its representative was sleeping off the effects of exceptionally heavy libations. When the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* telegraphed for explanation of the omission, the journalist boldly declared that he ignored De Rougemont because he did not believe a word of his story. That very day a man who had known De Rougemont out in Australia as a Swiss beachcomber, named Henri Louis Grein, rang up the *Daily Chronicle* on the telephone. The outcome was the famous *exposé* of De Rougemont.

Once, at a Wycliffe commemoration at Lutterworth, I found the same journalist in a condition which made it obviously impossible for him to attend the function. I managed to get out of him some idea of what amount of "copy" he had been instructed to send to his paper, and by searching his pockets I found the "pass" for telegraphing his report. So I was able to cover his deficiency by writing a descriptive sketch of the proceedings and "wiring" it in his name. I imagine that there were very

few journalists in Fleet Street who had not at one time or another rendered this journalist just such service. Apart from his one weakness he was a man we all liked for his chivalrous instincts and admired for his journalistic ability. He, too, was cut off in middle age—"a martyr to delirium tremens," I fear.



## CHAPTER III

### POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

**M**R. GLADSTONE was still dominating the House of Commons, though not in office, in my early days in London, and I sought every opportunity to hear the "old man eloquent." Though so old he was rarely out of his seat on the front bench, and I never saw him sprawling. He not only listened to speakers—even if they were men of no consequence addressing the House from the back benches—but he had a habit of twisting his head round towards the speaker to watch him closely as well as to listen intently. Mr. Gladstone had a profound respect for the House of Commons. He was perhaps the last Prime Minister to take the House really seriously. As leader of the Commons he always seemed to suggest that he recognized that the House was his master, and he, as Premier, its creation. Things are very different now. Mr. Gladstone accepted the principle that the Commons could dismiss him by a hostile vote if he thwarted its will. Moreover, Mr. Gladstone ruled his Cabinet and preserved inviolate the idea of collective responsibility—a principle which seems to have been jettisoned in our own times. Mr. Gladstone's dominant conviction that Heaven was always on his side was sincere enough, but it did not always secure acceptance from his own followers. Sir William Harcourt once said that he did not object to Mr. G. always having an ace of trumps tucked up his sleeve—but he did object to his saying the Almighty had put it there.

During my first years in London journalism it fell to my lot, often once or twice a week in the parliamentary

session, to report "deputations" to Ministers of State. They were solemn, almost august, occasions. Ministers of Lord Salisbury's Unionist Government, which was in office at that time, were austere and formidable personages who hedged themselves around with a divinity all their own. They received deputations from trade organizations in a spirit of condescension—like miniature Curzons, in fact. The "deputation," usually led by an M.P., "waited upon" the Minister with a deferential demeanour, and when solemnly ushered into the Board of Trade or Local Government Board office at the appointed hour, awaited the advent of the important man in quietude and humility. Till Dr. Fairbairn bluntly told Mr. Balfour that "we will not submit," the note of defiance was never heard at a ministerial deputation. The learned principal opened a new era in deputations—an era of truculence. Thirty years ago a deputation presented its case through spokesmen who addressed Cabinet Ministers in reverential tones, and almost expected a cavalier reply, or in many cases no reply at all—merely a nod indicating that the interview was over. Sometimes, prompted by the Permanent Secretary of the State Department, the Minister "waited upon" would give a stereotyped official reply. I have known cases where the reply was read from a memorandum prepared beforehand. No more would be heard of the deputation's representations. Occasionally a little humour would creep into a deputation's visit. When he was Lord President of the Council, the Duke of Devonshire put some questions to an education deputation that revealed such a fundamental and abysmal ignorance of the education system he was supposed to be administering that a titter went round the room. Generally, however, Ministers adopted the Irish maxim, "Never let a man know what you don't know," and by pursuing a policy of silence came out of the ordeal with untarnished reputations for omniscience.



Nowadays deputations stump off from Labour conferences to Downing Street on the spur of the moment and storm the P.M. in his fastness. And when there they talk to him with a candour that is not always veneered by excessive courtesy. When Mr. Lloyd George was facing a deputation of miners just before the great coal strike of 1921, one of the miners' leaders tried to make the Prime Minister understand what the men's demand for a "pool" really implied. He explained it by two or three examples of its probable operation. Still the Premier failed to grasp the idea—possibly he did not want to comprehend it. After one more effort, also in vain, the miners' leader lost patience. "You're daft, you silly beggar!" he ejaculated at the puzzled Prime Minister. And Mr. Lloyd George sat back in his chair and roared with laughter. Thirty years ago a Minister would have turned his eyes upward, confidently expecting to see the heavens falling.

Though I heard Mr. Gladstone speak on many occasions, in and out of Parliament, in the 'nineties, I never heard him save once, and that was in the 'eighties at Manchester, rise to his greatest heights. But I was in the House of Commons on the occasion of one of his fiercest encounters with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and I shall never forget it. Overnight Mr. Chamberlain had confronted the G.O.M. with a reference he had made years before to the Irish members as "men marching through rapine and plunder to the dismemberment and disintegration of the Empire." Mr. Gladstone hotly repudiated Mr. Chamberlain's orientation of that phrase, and for half an hour the House was held enthralled by the Homeric encounter between the two greatest debaters of the age. The buttons were off the foils, and both speakers were out to draw blood. I should not like to have been compelled to say who came off best in the duel. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, then a slim, monocled youth, was

kept running to and from the library bringing Mr. Chamberlain books and papers to corroborate his charges.

This was one of the liveliest evenings I ever spent in the House, for when this Gladstone-Chamberlain scene was over, Mr. Michael Davitt, of Fenian agitation fame, rose to make his maiden speech. Davitt had only one arm—he had lost the other in a factory machine—and this infirmity made the use of his notes rather conspicuous as he spoke. When Davitt had been speaking a few minutes, another member—I think it was Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett—raised a point of order. The hon. member, he declared, was reading his speech. Mr. Peel, who was then the Speaker of the House, was obviously outraged by the callous-spirited objection. His glare at the objector made one feel that he was throwing vitriol with his eyes. Then in the gentlest of sympathetic voices he reminded Mr. Davitt of the rule of the House that members must not read their speeches. Davitt proceeded without making the slightest change in the use of his notes. As a matter of fact, he was not reading at all, but with only one available arm he had to lay each separate page of his notes on the seat behind him before he could use the next page.

Mention of Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett recalls one of the best comedies I ever saw in Parliament. Sir Ellis was given a minor office in Lord Salisbury's Government on the express condition that he should not speak. As soon as the Salisbury Government's fall released him from this Trappist pledge, Sir Ellis jumped at his freedom. His first speech provided the farcical comedy. He rose late at night and moved the adjournment to secure his title to speak first next day. That had not been his intention, but he had failed to catch the Speaker's eye earlier. Unfortunately he had sent his speech beforehand to a Sheffield paper (he was M.P. for a division of that city), and the whole oration was published in the next morning's



issue with "hear, hears," "loud applause" and "laughter" dotted freely all over the columns. When, next afternoon, Sir Ellis rose to make his speech every Irish member produced a copy of the Sheffield paper from his pocket and, following the speech closely, "hear heard," "applauded" and "laughed" loudly and ironically wherever those interpellations appeared in the premature report. The House enjoyed the joke immensely. Strange to say, Sir Ellis went through the farce to the very last act. He did not curtail his speech by a line.

Though we profess that our system of parliamentary debate is "government by discussion," it is a curious fact that speakers rarely change votes in the House of Commons. In my parliamentary memory it has, I think, been claimed for only one speech that it changed the mind of a sufficient number of members to affect the result of a division. This was the speech made by Mr. H. H. Fowler, when Secretary for India. I heard that speech. I really went down to the House expecting to see a Government turned out. Lancashire was in a ferment over new duties on their cotton goods entering India, and Free Traders were aghast at what they imagined was Mr. Fowler's departure from strictly orthodox Cobdenism. Until Mr. Fowler spoke, the whole trend of the debate had gone heavily against the Government, and a "cave" sufficiently large to carry a hostile vote had become manifest. Mr. Fowler spoke for about an hour. The speech was a *tour de force*. Certainly I had never heard such a powerful mobilization of arguments. Mr. Fowler was a very chilly personality (his daughter says of him in her biography that he was the type of father who always liked to let his children have *his* own way), and I imagine that the House of Commons never felt any overwhelming affection for him. His conquest in the Indian Cotton Duties speech was all the more remarkable. It was a complete triumph over an unwilling House, and it saved

for a time a Government that had worn out its welcome and was tottering to its fall.

The most engaging political personality I have ever known was the late Mr. Tom Ellis, who was chief whip of the Rosebery Government. He had a very precarious majority at his command, made all the more precarious because Mr. Lloyd George was raising the standard of revolt in Wales against the Government. No chief whip had so many tribulations crowding upon one another as this gifted young Welsh Nationalist. I came to know him through Dr. Burford Hooke; and I often spent an hour with him at his Downing Street office. His kindness to me I can never forget—for I was only a youngster. Ellis wanted me to enter the Liberal publication department, which had not then been vitalized by the genius of Mr. Charles Geake, and I was sorely tempted to forsake journalism then. But Fleet Street had not lost its fascinations for me at that time, and I had not then discovered that journalism is only “an excellent profession to get out of.” My memory of Tom Ellis is ever green. There was a transparent sincerity about him—what I might almost call an irrepressible vivacity of faith in Liberalism. He would have died—did he not die?—for Liberalism and for Wales. In the very thick of “the dirty trade of party politics” he maintained a purity of soul and scorn of cynicism which set him in a category apart from most politicians. One felt he was too good for political life. He had a standard of truth that he might have borrowed from Robert Browning. And he was wholly above self-seeking. He must have been beloved of the gods, for he died very young.

Another politician whose sincerity always struck me as patent was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. He, too, was devoid of all self-seeking. I remember hearing Mr. William Brace, the Labour member, expressing his admiration for “C.-B.,” because he could not be “got at.”



"You can't tempt him, old C.-B.," he said; "he has everything he wants and you can't frighten him, because he wouldn't care if he went out of office to-morrow. He's too honest for politics." The patience with which C.-B. wore down the bitter prejudice against himself was an achievement of character. At the time of the Boer War the hatred of C.-B. was so intense that certain newspapers boycotted his speeches. One day the *Daily Mail* printed a paragraph that "Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman spoke last night at ——. How long will the English people tolerate this traitor?" Not a word of report of the speech. C.-B. had to submit to much wounding even in the house of his friends.

C.-B.'s patience was extraordinary. I will not say that he suffered fools gladly, but I once saw him exercise a supererogatory degree of forbearance with a drink-befuddled man. C.-B. had gone down to a seaside town to open a Railwaymen's Convalescent Home. The arrangements were excellent, in all respects save one. Nobody had been charged with the duty of looking after Sir Henry. He was left to wander about the grounds alone. After a time he found his way into the refreshment marquee, and sat down at a small tea-table at which I had taken a seat. I bowed, and Sir Henry entered genially into conversation, and when I explained that I was a journalist from London he chatted about journalism and journalists, English and French, in a very engaging way. While we were talking a middle-aged man, who would no doubt have described himself as a gentleman, but who was palpably in the garrulous stage of drunkenness (smelling of spirits, too), forced himself upon Sir Henry. "I'm a true Blue," he kept saying; "true Blue, sir, a Conservative of the true Blue sort." He tried to make Sir Henry understand that for all that he had no personal animosity against "damned Radicals." Indeed, he wanted C.-B. to recognize that the absence of that animosity was proof of the splendour



of his toleration. Sir Henry was uncomfortable, but his affability was proof against any display of annoyance. He stood the infliction for ten minutes; but when the fellow sat down at the same table and called for tea, C.-B. quickly got up and strolled into the grounds again. I met him later on one of the paths, walking alone, and he stopped me to say "our true Blue friend presented a pathetic spectacle." At the railway station I saw the "true Blue" making his way into Sir Henry's saloon to assure him again, I suppose, that he bore C.-B. no animosity, notwithstanding his Radicalism.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELIGION IN POLITICS

THE House of Commons when first I became familiar with it was a two-party House—for though in theory the Irish party was Independent it was affiliated, by virtue of its hopes, with the Liberals. Possibly we shall never see a strictly two-party House again. The rise of the Labour party, as an Independent unit in Parliament, has, of course, occurred in my time. There were Labour members like Mr. T. Burt, Mr. Henry Broadhurst, and Mr. William Abraham before 1890; but they ranked as Radicals within the Liberal fold. Though I did not know him with any real intimacy I met Mr. Keir Hardie frequently; and when I had overcome an initial prejudice (which I confess I felt after his theatrical entry into the House in a deer-stalker cap) I came to have a profound admiration for him. He was transparently sincere and absolutely free from self-seeking. He lived the simplest of simple lives in a tiny cottage in Neville's Court—a crowded alley off Fetter Lane—and except for his tobacco and a few books he spent nothing on himself outside the barest necessities of life. No one I have ever met took Jesus Christ quite so literally as Keir Hardie. The Sermon on the Mount was practical politics to him. His religion was soaked into his being, and his sensitiveness to the pain and injustice around him did not merely distress his mind; it seared his soul. He had been brought up in the Evangelical Union Church in Scotland (now fused with the Congregationalists), and in 1892 he created a furore at the Congregational Union Assembly at Bradford

by arraigning the churches for their unconcern over social inequalities and economic injustice. "The Christianity of the schools has had its day," he declared. "The Christianity of Christ is coming to the front. You preach to the respectability in your congregations." The ministers howled their denial. "You do, you do, you do," reiterated Keir Hardie. "You leave the suffering masses of humanity outside. In the slums of the city where men, and women, and children made in the image of God are being driven down into hell for time and eternity, you have no word of hope and mercy, and you have not a helping hand to stretch out." Though howled down in a passionate temper in 1892 Keir Hardie lived to see the social question become the serious concern of the Free Churches, or, at any rate, of the younger Free Church ministers and laymen. Long afterwards I heard Keir Hardie say, with quivering lips, that if he had to live his life again he would dedicate himself to preaching the gospel of Jesus.

One reason why I watched with close interest the rise of the Labour party was that its early leaders were almost all Free Churchmen, men who learned the art of public speech as Methodist and Baptist preachers, and derived their ethical passion from the gospels. Mr. Bernard Shaw, who is not always a gentle critic of the Churches, told the Socialists of Glasgow that at the back of all popular movements there must be a religion, and by way of illustration he added: "The miners would never have raised themselves through their Trades Unionism and Co-operative Societies had they not raised themselves through their Methodist chapels." Even yet—though nowadays trade union ward meetings form the training ground for potential Labour M.P.s rather than chapel meetings and outdoor preaching services—many of the leading figures in the Labour party are debtors to Free Church training. Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., is a Wesleyan lay preacher. Originally he was a Congregationalist, and when a boy



used to blow the organ at St. Paul's Congregational Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne. He became a Methodist as a young man, and he is still a faithful Wesleyan. Mr. John R. Clynes was, in early boyhood, associated with a Congregational Church at Salford, when the Rev. Bernard J. Snell was its minister. William Abraham was a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist lay preacher, Mr. W. Brace is a Baptist, and Mr. James H. Thomas was at one time a Baptist Sunday-school teacher. Mr. Thomas began earning his living by selling newspapers at Newport when he was about nine years of age, but getting a job on the railway worked his way to the engine-driver grade. His fine quality of mind was observed when, on one occasion, he went as a deputation from the railwaymen to the directors of the G.W.R. After the interview he was offered a well-paid post in the Swindon office. It would have vastly improved both his income and his prospects, but "Jim" Thomas's prompt reply was: "No, thank you, sir, I don't want to leave my class." Mr. George Barnes, M.P., is a Congregationalist, deeply interested in Browning Hall Settlement at Walworth.

The Christian idealism of the Labour party has all along made a powerful appeal to the younger generation of Free Church ministers, and at the General Election of 1918 an immense number of them revolted from Mr. Lloyd George to throw in their lot with the Labour men. Many of them, I know, have been bitterly disappointed at the failure of the Labour party in the House of Commons to put up any effective opposition excepting upon "Bread and Butter" issues. This disappointment is not confined to young Free Church ministers.

Herr Bebel, who ruled the Socialist group in the German Reichstag with a rod of iron, imposed a pledge of total abstinence upon his followers. Mr. Keir Hardie in 1906 did his utmost to induce the Labour group returned at that General Election to bind themselves to be teetotallers

while within the precincts of the House of Commons. The attempt was abortive, perhaps because it cut across the British instinct of personal freedom and individual moral responsibility. Yet it would have been a self-denying ordinance which might have proved worth all the sacrifice. I once heard a cynical Parliamentarian say : "Oh, but you can square a Labour member with a bottle of champagne." I do not believe it, but it is distressing to hear it said. The atmosphere of the House breeds cynicism, and the idea that every man has his price is almost entrenched at Westminster. For every Tory member who thinks that a Labour man's price is a bottle of champagne there is a Labour M.P. who thinks that a Tory member can be squared by a subordinate office and a Liberal member who can be silenced by a knighthood.

Free Churchmen have almost won their liberty in the State, but they are still at the mercy of capricious landlords. Sites for chapels are not easily procured, and chapel leases are often loaded with arbitrary restrictions concerning the uses to which the buildings may be put. The grievance is felt most in the rural districts and in the small towns. In the great cities the social prestige of the Established Church has almost gone—a Free Churchman finds it no drawback to be a Free Churchman, and while he wishes to be on good terms with the clergy he tolerates no patronage; but in the country the social screw is still remorselessly turned in many quarters. What made me a political dissenter and a fighter against privilege was the clause which a Tory peer in Lancashire imposed upon his leaseholders. My father was a Congregational deacon, and the son, grandson, and great-grandson of Congregational deacons, but I twice had to witness his signature to a lease embodying a covenant that for the whole period of 999 years there should not be erected on the land he was leasing "a public-house, slaughter-house, *dissenting chapel, or other nuisance.*" Twenty-five years passed, and



then came a chance to avenge that insult to my father's faith. It came when the Peers threw out Mr. Lloyd George's Budget. My belief in the Budget was not very profound; but, by pen and voice, by canvassing, and every possible means I pulled my weight against the Peers in that election. That clause in that old lease, adding insult to injury, kept the flame of Radicalism burning in me. Inequalities in education, in burial and marriage laws, and a lot of exasperating little disabilities kept the old Nonconformist spirit ablaze in this way. While Free Churchmen have no grave grievances to-day they cannot wholly forget that no measure for redressing their former grievances ever went through Parliament with the help, or even with the expressed approval, of the Anglican Church. The unenthusiastic response of Free Church laymen to the Lambeth Conference Encyclical on reunion is, I think, due in a large measure to the bad record of bishops in the long struggle for religious liberty in England.

I am afraid the general public takes very little interest in the reports of Royal Commissions, and none whatever in the evidence. But when I had to report the sittings of these august bodies in the early 'nineties I often found the proceedings as fascinating as a *cause célèbre* in the Law Courts. The oddest of odd things often turn up in these inquiries. I remember that when Mr. Frederick Rogers (who, if anyone, was the author of old age pensions) was in the witness-box of the Royal Commission, he was insistent that there should be no character test of old age pensioners. A bishop on the Commission seemed distressed over this laxity, and in a pained tone asked the witness if, really, he would give an old age pension to a prostitute. "Most certainly, my lord," Mr. Rogers (who was a good Churchman) answered without hesitation, "if she is a prostitute at the age of sixty-five." Another bishop who sat on the Birth-rate Commission turned the tables neatly on a very modern-minded lady witness, an



unmarried intellectual, who had been presenting her view that an unmarried woman who had a child to satisfy her maternal instinct ought to suffer no stigma. The bishop raised his eyebrows and quickly insinuated the question : "May I ask, Miss —— if you practise your own doctrine ? " Before the Copyright Commission Mr. Herbert Spencer said that ninety-nine out of a hundred Englishmen, given the choice of a daily dose of castor oil or the task of reading a page of one of his (Mr. Spencer's) books, would reply : "Pass me over the castor oil."

The most smashing cross-examination of a witness I ever saw (I just missed Sir Charles Russell's immortal cross-examination of Richard Pigott before the Parnell Commission) was Mr. Falconer's severe handling of Mr. Lawson in the Marconi Committee. For two or three days that financial journalist was kept wriggling like a worm on a hook while the remorseless investigator probed him with searching questions. Mr. Lawson could produce no sort of evidence that would stand the test of cross-examination to show that Mr. Lloyd George had had any dealings in Marconi shares. But Mr. Lawson had hardly left the witness chair, a nerve-shattered man, before an admission was made in the Law Courts that Mr. Lloyd George had made an investment in American Marconi shares. The capacity of even a Special Parliamentary Committee to elucidate all the facts in a case may be questioned. The Marconi Committee might have completed its evidence and presented its report without hearing of the American Marconi share purchases but for a libel action which was tried simultaneously in the Law Courts and disclosed the blazing secret. The party system showed its worst side over the Marconi Committee in the presentation of two *ex parte* reports : (1) condemnatory by the Conservatives, and (2) whitewashing by the Liberals. The only impartial report by Sir Albert Spicer, as chairman, was an act of supreme courage in the circumstances. Sir Albert did not

exonerate the Chancellor of the Exchequer from blame, but just as certainly he did not find him guilty of the charges with which his enemies accused him. It redounds to Mr. Lloyd George's credit that he did not resent Sir Albert Spicer's judicial report upon the matter. I gather that he would have been glad if the whole Committee had adopted it. I know that his friendship with Sir Albert remained unaffected.

## CHAPTER V

### COLLABORATING WITH W. G. GRACE

MY happiest days in journalism, I think, were the cricket seasons of 1890 and 1891, when I was writing descriptive reports of cricket in London for the *Manchester Examiner*, and following the Lancashire team on its southern tours. A day in the Press box at a first class county match is still a long drawn out ecstasy to me. For a time I was thrown among cricketers, amateur and professional, and found them sterling, healthy-minded, large-hearted men with scarcely an exception. For George Lohmann I had a great affection. But the cricketer with whom I was brought into closest contact was the incomparable W. G. Grace.

I spent all the leisure of twelve months, some years later, working in collaboration with Dr. Grace on his well-known book, "W. G. : Cricketing Reminiscences." It is not a breach of faith now to say that I wrote the book. Grace was choke full of cricketing history, experience and reminiscences, but he was a singularly inarticulate man, and had he been left to write his own cricketing biography it would never have seen the light. My friend Mr. James Bowden (through Mr. Coulson Kernahan) sought my co-operation with Grace, who had entered into an agreement with him to produce a volume of reminiscences for publication in his jubilee year. It had seemed as if the contract would expire without a line of the book having been written. Grace accepted me as his collaborator with the utmost heartiness, and, although the task



of getting the material from him was almost heartbreaking, I enjoyed the work immensely. My plan was to spend three half-days a week with W. G. in his own study—he was living at Sydenham then—and by every conceivable artifice that an experienced interviewer could bring into operation, lure him into a flow of reminiscence. Many days I drew a blank and came away with scarcely sufficient material for a paragraph. On other days I managed to inveigle him into a reminiscient vein, and he would send me off with data enough for one or two chapters.

W. G. Grace's mind functioned oddly. He never stuck to any train of recollection, but would jump from an event in the 'sixties to something that happened in, say, the last test match. Often I left his house in absolute despair. Once, at least, I asked leave to abandon the enterprise; but I was urged to persist. I remember very distinctly one age-long afternoon when I was trying to get out of W. G. something of the psychology of a batsman making a big score in a great match. All that he wanted to say in recording some dazzling batting feat of his own was, "Then I went in and made 284." "Yes," I would reply, "but that is not good enough. People want to know what W. G. Grace felt like when he was doing it; what thoughts he had and what the whole mental experience of a big innings means to a batsman." "I did not feel anything; I had too much to do to watch the bowling and see how the fieldsmen were moved about to think anything." The very best that I could get out of him was that "some days a batsman's eye is *in* and other days it is not. When his eye is *in*, the cricket ball seems the size of a football and he can't miss it. When his eye isn't *in* then he isn't in long, because he's soon bowled out."

I failed utterly, I confess, to draw from W. G. anything adequate in the way of a chapter on the art of

cricket captaincy. He had the generalship of the game by instinct, and, in his autocratic fashion, was a sound captain with every artifice at his finger-tips. But he had no consciousness of what he did know in that department of cricket strategy—which, it must be remembered, was an empirical matter and not the exact science to which Australian captaincy has reduced it. So his advice to captains in his reminiscences is poor stuff. I could get nothing out of him that was in the slightest degree illuminating or helpful.

Conscious of his own inarticulateness, Grace was fearfully apprehensive lest I should put into his reminiscences any words that were not in his accustomed vocabulary. One day in running through a chapter I had written and which we were revising together, he pulled up at the word "inimical." "No," he said firmly, "that word can't go in. Why, if that went into the book I should have the fellows at Lords coming to me in the pavilion and saying, 'Look here, W. G., where did you get that word from?'"

About Dr. W. G. Grace there was something indefinable—like the simple faith of a child—which arrested and fascinated me. He was a big grown-up boy, just what a man who only lived when he was in the open air might be expected to be. A wonderful kindness ran through his nature, mingling strangely with the arbitrary temper of a man who had been accustomed to be dominant over other men.

His temper was very fiery—perhaps gusty is a better word—and his prejudices ran away with him. He detested Radicals in politics, and disliked umpires who had ever given him out l.b.w. I asked him one day what he thought of a once famous Lancashire bowler, at that time ranking as a first class umpire. "I don't want to say much about *him* in this book," he replied. "He gave me out l.b.w. to a ball that broke four inches when I



was just 'getting my eye in' at the Gentlemen v. Players match at the Oval in——" He could not forget that crowning offence. Of other men he made idols—they could do no wrong. "Ranji" was one of them. So were Charles B. Fry, F. S. Jackson and Archie MacLaren. We had warm arguments and all the little differences that collaboration almost necessarily involves; but never a moment of anger disturbed our relations, and we were good friends to the end of the partnership, and afterwards.

W. G. Grace would have made an excellent subject for a modern psycho-analyst who might, from W. G.'s subconscious stores of forgotten cricket lore, have extracted for us a classic of cricket literature. Reverting to W.G.'s choleric temperament, I think I once did make him really cross. It was when I flatly refused to believe his statement that he had only one lung, and had, in fact, had only one lung since his childhood. "Now who," I asked him incredulously, "is going to believe that?" I simply could not credit it. Grace was, for the moment, nettled, and then he said rather testily, "I'm not going to have you doubting what I say; I'll call my wife, and she'll confirm what I have told you." He called Mrs. Grace, who corroborated W. G.'s story. Then I apologized and we made peace.

While I was engaged with Grace on his reminiscences and had about a third of the book written and revised, the publisher entered into an arrangement with Mr. W. M. Crook (now secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Federation and a great authority on London bird-life), who was then editing the *Echo*, for serial day by day publication of the chapters. I was horror-struck. I gravely doubted my capacity to keep up the regular supply of "copy"; but serial publication was actually starting before I heard of the contract. The *Echo* got a fine fillip to its circulation from Grace's reminiscences. One day I was with my friend Mr. F. A. Atkins at



the National Liberal Club when we met Mr. W. M. Crook in the hall. Mr. Atkins asked him if he was singing :

' Grace, 'tis a charming sound,  
Harmonious to the ear.

Mr. Crook smiled at the apposite quotation; but a few minutes later Mr. Atkins ejaculated: " Why didn't I finish the quotation " :

Heaven with the Echo shall resound,  
And all the earth shall hear.

## CHAPTER VI

### INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM

I HAD been three months in London when I called one day at the Congregational Union office in the Memorial Hall to seek some information for my paper, the *Manchester Examiner*. I sent in my card, and was rather overwhelmed by the kindness shown me by the Rev. D. Burford Hooke, then acting as secretary of the Union during Dr. Hannay's last illness. He invited me to join him at tea in his room, and placed a wealth of good copy at my disposal. I do not think I saw Dr. Burford Hooke again until the next May meetings of the Congregational Union, when he came down from the platform to the Press table to greet me. Then came the First International Congregational Council held in the then newly opened King's Weigh House Chapel in 1891. My most vivid memory of the International Council was the impression made upon me by Dr. R. W. Dale, who was its president. He looked so ill and at times had such a ghastly pallor on his face that one might have imagined that he was dying on his feet. From the Press table close to the platform I could see the violent palpitations of his heart under his coat. Mrs. Dale, sitting in the gallery close to the pulpit when he was delivering his presidential address, watched him anxiously—half fearful that he might collapse at any moment. Only the tremendous will-power which was so characteristic of Dr. Dale could have carried a man through such an ordeal in such a state of physical weakness.

Indirectly the International Council opened the door for me into religious journalism. I am not sure whether

I ought to be thankful or not. In the monetary sense I have perhaps been the loser, since there are no financial plums for a religious journalist. But after thirty years in this backwater of journalism I have no regrets that I left the main stream, whose waters nowadays are somewhat muddied.

After the International Council I frequently called on Dr. Burford Hooke at the Memorial Hall. He had shown me many kindnesses, and when he acquired the *Independent and Nonconformist* he invited me to be his assistant editor. A kindlier man never breathed, and I can never forget my obligations to him. At the end of my first month as his assistant editor Dr. Burford Hooke gave me a cheque which was made out for two pounds ten shillings more than I was entitled to receive under our agreement. I pointed out that he had made a mistake. "Oh, no," he said. "I find you are more valuable than I thought you would be, and I've added £30 a year to the salary we agreed upon." Three months later he repeated the increment, and I believe that if the finances of the paper had allowed it he would have made a habit of expanding my salary every three months. The psychological influence of these unsolicited increments of salary may have repaid Dr. Burford Hooke, for they seemed to multiply my capacity for work.

One of Dr. Burford Hooke's greatest services to me was to dispatch me on long tours, as a special correspondent, into almost every quarter of England to get acquainted with Congregational ministers and see what Congregational churches were doing. I visited almost all the great centres of population—north, south, east and west—in this way, and accumulated stores of invaluable information about men and churches. In this way I met, in their early years of ministry, many of the men who are now leaders in Free Church life. Perhaps my most cherished memory of those visits is of one I paid in 1893



to the Rev. F. A. Russell, then at York. We became very intimate friends, and the friendship lasted till Russell's death in 1921. Neither of us was systematic in our private correspondence, but we always met just at the stage where we last parted. Literally we almost knew each other's bank balances—which were never large with either of us. I was walking in York with Russell when he had his first seizure with the bronchial asthma to which afterwards he was always a martyr. It completely distorted his life. Frederick Russell was a very choice spirit. His childhood had been clouded by bitter experiences, but he was never soured by that. Indeed, I think it deepened his capacity for human sympathy. I never met a bookman whose reading was more all-embracing. It was prodigious.

Another memory of those visits arranged by Dr. Burford Hooke is of a day spent with the saintly Dr. Henry R. Reynolds at Cheshunt College. Dr. Reynolds was getting old and his force was far spent, but I never forget his exquisite courtliness of manner and his extreme courtesy to me, though I was a mere boy. That passing association with Dr. Reynolds adds to my joy to-day in being one of the governors of his old college now located at Cambridge.

I was by no means the only youngster to whom Dr. Burford Hooke held out a friendly and helpful hand. There was quite a long procession of us—Hooke's boys, we called ourselves—every one of whom, in one way or another, Dr. Burford Hooke helped to get a foot on the ladder. I once heard Sir James M. Barrie pay a tribute to Mr. Frederick Greenwood, the famous editor of the *St. James' Gazette* and a great friend of neophytes in journalism. Barrie said he could never say how much he owed to Greenwood. "He invented me," he said in that soft fascinating drawl of his. "I bought my first silk hat to impress him. There is a long row of us, all in our first silk hats and our hearts in our mouths, who owe

everything to Greenwood. Those silk hats are old and battered now, Mr. Greenwood, but dying they salute you." I feel towards Dr. Burford Hooke something like Sir James Barrie felt towards Frederick Greenwood, and I could make a list of men who share my sense of obligation to him. He was a great encourager of youth.

I owed much, too, in those early days to a very wonderful old man, Mr. Charles S. Miall, who was a colleague with me on the *Independent and Nonconformist* when Mr. Hooke edited it, and later when I became its managing editor with Dr. Guinness Rogers as consulting editor. Mr. Miall was a brother of Edward Miall who founded the *Nonconformist*, created the Liberation Society, and once so nettled Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons by saying that his conscience would not allow him to vote for a course the Liberal leader was pursuing, that the G.O.M. hotly told him, "for God's sake, rather than outrage your conscience, vote against me." Mr. Charles Miall was over seventy when I became his colleague. He was hale and alert, and his memory (except for names) was amazingly retentive. His range of information was so wide that talking with him was like consulting an encyclopædia. He indexed himself for my benefit, and would go to endless trouble to ply me with data about men and movements that I wanted to possess and to which no books gave access. Mr. Miall belonged to the old school of sedate journalism. He could only do his work in his own way, and in his own time. Left to himself, his output of copy was vast and up to a high standard. But the slightest disturbance of his routine of habit flurried him and left him sterile. His temper was never ruffled, and his benevolent spirit survived every jolt. In his early days in London Mr. Charles Miall had shared lodgings with Herbert Spencer, the philosopher, of whom he had some curious memories to recount—especially of his distaste for music. I believe it was Mr. Charles Miall who



encouraged Herbert Spencer to write his first series of essays. They were on the true sphere of government, and were published in the *Nonconformist*.

Dr. R. W. Dale had a great regard for Mr. Charles Miall, and when in London—which was seldom in those days—he dropped in once or twice at the *Independent and Nonconformist* office to smoke a pipe with Mr. Miall. I remember Mr. Miall saying to Dr. Dale: “You still smoke, then?” “Yes, I *still* smoke,” Dr. Dale replied. “Tell me, how much do you smoke a week, Mr. Miall?” “I suppose about two ounces a week,” Mr. Miall answered. “Two ounces,” gasped Dr. Dale, “only two ounces! I’ve been cutting down my tobacco allowance lately; but I find it a terrible trial to keep it within half a pound a week.” Dr. Dale and Mr. Miall soon had the editorial office thick with tobacco smoke. Dr. Burford Hooke disliked the smell of tobacco in the office, but he somehow contrived not even to notice the smell of Dr. Dale’s full-flavoured tobacco.

No Free Church leader since Dr. Dale has exercised quite the supreme authority as a political Dissenter that he enjoyed until he followed Mr. Chamberlain into the Liberal Unionist camp. The political chasm caused Dr. Dale to stand aloof from the Congregational Union platform, and he was chary about being drawn into the Free Church Council movement. When he was President of the Birmingham Free Church Council he vetoed any action that savoured of politics. A cartoon that appeared in one of the papers representing Dr. Dale addressing Birmingham Nonconformists in the words: “Hush, no politics; I dine to-night at Highbury,” caused Dr. Dale real irritation. Dr. Dale and Dr. Guinness Rogers remained fast friends to the end; but after the Home Rule split there was a certain gulf fixed. It was not the mere fact that they differed, but that there was a wide field of life which was not common ground to them. Nonconformity was hope-



lessly divided on Irish Home Rule, and many personal friendships among eminent Free Church ministers were sorely strained and even sundered.

Not until the Balfour Education Act of 1901 (which Mr. Chamberlain warned Mr. Balfour would reunite Nonconformity to Liberalism) were the Free Churches even approximately solid in party allegiance. The unity realized in 1906 lasted just twelve years, and then Mr. Lloyd George by his khaki election in 1918 shattered Free Church solidarity even more effectively than Mr. Gladstone did in 1886. The political discord in the Free Church camp is more profound, if less strident, now than it was in 1886, and I fancy even Dr. Dale, who retained his essential Liberalism, would have been shocked to think that in 1919 the treasurer of the Congregational Union of England and Wales headed the nomination paper of a Conservative candidate at a bye-election. Dr. Guinness Rogers would have collapsed in a fit.

## CHAPTER VII

### DR. GUINNESS ROGERS

**D**R. GUINNESS ROGERS was past his prime when I became closely associated with him on the *Independent and Nonconformist*—he as consulting editor and I as managing editor. He was over seventy, and I was under thirty; but our intimate association, extending over five years, was of the happiest character. Moreover, it was without capitulation on either side. Dr. Rogers was a typical Irishman—impulsive, imperious, and explosive, but if he barked he never bit. My most abiding impression is of his tenderness and abounding kindness of heart. I felt towards him as a man feels towards a father, and he treated me as a son. Only once had we a moment of friction—though we differed, in a perfectly friendly way, a hundred times. The one occasion of real difference arose out of my publication in the *Independent and Nonconformist*, without consulting him, of a letter by the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, controverting certain views expressed by Dr. Rogers in a signed article in the previous week's paper. Mr. Silvester Horne had made "hay" of Dr. Rogers's contentions, and I think the old gentleman knew it. He argued testily that Mr. Silvester Horne's letter ought to have been put into the waste-paper basket. I insisted that a responsible and eminent Congregational minister had a right to be heard, especially as he was expressing the opinions of the younger generation against those of one of the older school. But Dr. Rogers would not be convinced. He was angry, and I left him rather disconcerted by the encounter. But the last post that same day brought me, at home, a letter

written in Dr. Rogers's own crabbed handwriting expressing deep contrition for his irritability in the morning and begging me to forget the episode. He added that it had been a joy to him in his old age to find that he could work harmoniously with a man so much his junior, and he hoped that what had occurred in the morning would not in the least disturb the good feeling between us. This letter embarrassed me almost as much as the friction earlier in the day had distressed me. When next we met it was glad, confident morning again, and as long as we were associated no clouds crossed the horizon.

On the day Dr. Dale died I found Dr. Rogers in a miserable state. The tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke of his old friend. There was a similarly distressing scene when I told Dr. Rogers of the sudden death of Dr. Charles Albert Berry. Upon his friends Dr. Rogers poured out a wealth of love, and as he grew older and friend after friend passed beyond the veil a drear sense of loneliness weighed heavily upon him. One day when I congratulated him upon his physical and mental vigour at the age of eighty he sighed deeply, and in his sonorous voice quoted the Psalm :

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow."

The old man's lips quivered and his voice shook as he recited the familiar words, and then he added: "It's a terribly trying experience to live past one's own generation and to be left behind by all one's friends." Then, with an obvious effort, he brushed aside his melancholy, and in a few minutes he was plunged in the affairs of the hour—as alert and vibrant as a man of forty.

At his best Dr. Guinness Rogers was a really mighty orator. He belonged to the Victorian school of rhetoricians, and an excited admirer who came out of a meeting declaring that "Rogers's speech was grand—all perora-



tions," passed a shrewd if unconscious criticism upon his cardinal weakness. Men of a younger school called Dr. Rogers "Boanerges," but it was said affectionately, without a suggestion of derision. When he spoke at the Congregational Union in the 'nineties we counted the sentences till the name of Gladstone came. If Dr. Rogers felt he was getting "well away off the tee" as he began a speech we might have to wait five minutes for the magic name, but if he drew no cheer by his opening sentence we could lay our lives that the second sentence would bring its allusion to "that noble Christian statesman, William Ewart Gladstone." Then the cheers came, the orator caught fire, and was "off." The device was rarely known to fail. Dr. Guinness Rogers was delighted when the Prince of Wales (King Edward), presiding at a Hospital Committee meeting, remarked that some point which had been raised on a religious question might be referred to "my friend Dr. Guinness Rogers and the Bishop of London, who would settle it in ten minutes." But the very proudest moment in Guinness Rogers's life was when Mr. Gladstone stood on the veranda of his house at Clapham and addressed the crowd gathered outside.

On his mother's side Dr. Rogers was related to the Guinness family of brewers, and he named his eldest son Arthur Guinness Rogers after his Irish relative. The son, like all three of Dr. Rogers's sons, entered the Congregational Ministry. He went to America for some years and returned with a Doctor of Divinity degree. Some confusion arose through there being two Dr. Guinness Rogerses in English Congregationalism, and one day Rogers *père* broached the matter to Rogers *filis* with a view to obviating the little difficulty.

"Oh, all right, father," said Dr. Arthur Guinness Rogers, "we needn't make any bones about that. I'll be just Dr. Arthur G. Rogers and you can stick to the brewery."

From Dr. Guinness Rogers I heard a story illustrating the quite wonderful affection that subsisted between Sir William Harcourt and his son Lulu (later Lord Harcourt). Sir William was a guest along with Dr. Rogers at a dinner given by Lord Tweedmouth. When the cigars were passed round Sir William Harcourt declined one. His host expressed surprise, knowing that Sir William was very fond of a good cigar.

"I'm not smoking just now," explained Sir William. "The fact is that Lulu is suffering from a little throat trouble, and has been ordered not to smoke for a time. It is a fearful deprivation to him, and I do not like to make it harder for him by smelling of tobacco myself. So I'm not smoking until Lulu is allowed to smoke again."

Dr. Guinness Rogers was brought up before the total abstinence movement had taken any firm hold on the Congregational Ministry. He could remember when, at the early meetings of the Congregational Union, a barrel of beer and a joint of cold beef were always placed on a sideboard at the back of the hall for delegates to refresh themselves. When Dr. Newman Hall was eighty he was asked to what he attributed his longevity. "To the fact," he replied, "that I have always been a teetotaller."

A few weeks later Dr. Rogers, just after making a big speech that had tumultuously moved a great meeting, was met by Hugh Price Hughes, who was a strenuous campaigner for total abstinence, and who asked:

"How do *you* account for your longevity, Rogers?"

"Because I've *never* been a teetotaller," retorted Guinness Rogers, laughing loudly.

Near the end of his life Dr. Rogers told me, however, that if he had been beginning life afresh he would be a teetotaller and would take to the temperance platform.

Dr. Rogers was to the last a very hard reader, and he was catholic in his tastes, though biographies of politicians and ecclesiastics were his favourite reading. But he liked



novels—sloppy novels; even penny novelettes did not come amiss. I remember going with him to Oxford once. At Paddington he asked me to get him the *Contemporary Review*—if it was out—and the “Bow Bells” and “Princess” Novelettes. I got all three, and he sandwiched the *Contemporary* between the penny dreadfuls. Even minor poetry, if it came his way, was welcome to Dr. Rogers. He had a fine library with a strong element of patristic literature and the Puritan Fathers, but nothing in print came amiss to him. He was voracious.

When I was managing editor of the *Independent and Nonconformist* Dr. T. J. Macnamara was editing the *Schoolmaster*, and both papers were printed by the same firm. Moreover, the two papers were set up in the same composing room and under the same foreman. Dr. Macnamara and I never met in those days—though we met often enough in later years, chiefly on the golf course—but that foreman printer formed a curious link between us. He was a dour Scot, Bennett by name, a first-rate composing-room “clicker” with a high sense of conscientiousness. He played Macnamara off against me and played me off against Macnamara. The *Independent* had to be got to press before the *Schoolmaster*. If my proofs were late, Bennett always blamed Macnamara for rushing *Schoolmaster* “copy” upon him; and if *Schoolmaster* proofs were delayed, Macnamara was told that Porritt hung up everything by keeping the *Independent* back till the last moment. Through Bennett I got to picture Dr. Macnamara as a ravening wolf of whom his poor printer stood in mortal dread; and I have no doubt that Macnamara, through Bennett, visualized me as a ghoul who was hanging his printer’s grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.

Bennett hated the sight of Dr. Guinness Rogers’s cramped handwriting, and the compositors loathed it. When an article by Dr. Rogers was being given out in



"takes" to the composers Bennett was always in a state of fevered anxiety. Rather than come up to the foreman's desk to take a page of Dr. Rogers's "copy" the composers would "ca' canny" on their previous "takes." They were paid according to their production in those days, but they preferred to lose money rather than face that terrible calligraphy. Once, Bennett, who was nothing if not resourceful, got over this recurring difficulty with Dr. Rogers's "copy." I sent him a long signed article without reading it, but was surprised on receiving the proof (on the very eve of going to press) that the article fell far below my estimate of the space it would require. Inquiry led to the discovery that Bennett had cut out the middle of the article (discarding three pages of MS). Naturally I was indignant, but Bennett was quite imperturbable. "It's improved the article," he said. And perhaps it had. The oddest part of the story is that Dr. Guinness Rogers never noticed the omission. But Bennett never attempted that trick again on me.

On second thoughts I am very doubtful whether Dr. Guinness Rogers would have been greatly concerned even if he had noticed that his leading article had been ruthlessly curtailed. I often cut his "copy" severely, and he was never resentful. An easier man to work with—once one understood him—I could hardly imagine. When he wrote his autobiography Dr. Guinness Rogers exceeded by 30,000 words the length that the publishers had laid down as the maximum. He finished the MS. just as he was leaving for a holiday in Scotland. He handed the typescript over to me in his study at Clapham Common. I saw at once that it would have to be reduced by 30,000 words.

"If that is so," said Dr. Guinness Rogers, "I wish you would do it for me. Take the manuscript away, cut it down to the proper length, and hand it over to the publishers."

I cannot say I relished having such a task thrust upon

me, but I did it. I blue-pencilled out some of Dr. Rogers's most cherished recollections and deleted page after page of the typewritten script. He saw the book next in page proofs, and when I met him on his return from Scotland he told me that he had been puzzled to recall what I had left out. A man who uncomplainingly submits to his autobiography being chopped about by a man of less than half his age must have some of the qualities of a saint.

## CHAPTER VIII

### C. SILVESTER HORNE

GREATEST among all the joys of friendship that I have had in life was the joy of knowing, pretty intimately, Charles Silvester Horne. When I was acting as managing editor of the *Independent and Nonconformist*, Mr. Silvester Horne, then at Kensington Chapel, contributed a regular article for young people. I say regular; but it was anything but regular. Horne's contribution could never even be relied upon to come at all. Whenever he sent in a belated article he sent an apology too. I wish I had preserved those letters. They were always delicious in humour—a whimsical amalgam of mock contrition and on-my-oath sort of promises of amendment in the matter of regularity. After a time I gave up all hope of ever getting Horne to supply his article at any fixed interval—weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. I was just grateful whenever one came.

In his Kensington days—indeed all his life—Silvester Horne was far too much of a nomad to write regularly for the Press. We used to tease him for his constitutional incapacity to sleep two consecutive nights in the same bed. When he went to Whitefields he became more of a vagrant than ever; and Sunday was almost the only day of the week when he was visible in London. If Silvester Horne had not been a great preacher-evangelist he might have been a great journalist. He had the journalistic *nous*, and he loved to write. His father had been the editor of a country paper, and Silvester Horne inherited the instinct. Of the *London Signal*—the monthly he started at White-



fields—he was immensely proud; and if any journalistic subject was being talked about in his presence, he would interpose with, “As editor of the *London Signal*, I think——” and his laughing eyes would be homes of merriment. The *Signal* was an amateur product, but no professional journalist wanted to pick holes in it. Horne practically wrote it all, and generally wrote, too, at the penultimate moment when the printing machine was waiting. Generally the best journalism is so produced. What an editor of a London daily Silvester Horne might have been, provided with a capable managing editor! I sometimes thought that with Silvester Horne in its editorial chair the *Tribune* might have been a sort of *Manchester Guardian* for southern Liberalism. It had magnificent features, but lacked just the touch of incandescence a man of Silvester Horne’s quality might have given to it.

There used to hang just outside the vestry door at Whitefields a full-length portrait of Silvester Horne painted in his Kensington days. It was the portrait of an ethereal youth, slim in body, spirituel in expression, and—well, an excellent portrait of the Silvester Horne I knew in his early Kensington days. But visitors to Whitefields often failed to recognize in that portrait the Silvester Horne they knew, the robust, fighting knight-errant who only found his real self when he moved to Tottenham Court Road. Horne had found the Kensington saints rather stuffy; but he loved the vagabonds of central London. And he liked to do things audaciously. How he chuckled when he got a public-house closed and hired its bar parlour for a Sunday school class-room! And what joy he experienced when a generous friend bought up a disreputable house at the back of Whitefields—a house associated with a nauseous murder—and Horne was allowed to convert it into a model day-nursery!

One of the many undertakings in which I co-operated

with Silvester Horne was a campaign to get Free Churchmen to stand as Liberal candidates in the general election of 1906. The Balfour Education Acts had inflamed Nonconformity, and for the first time since Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886 Nonconformists were solidly welded together against what they regarded as a monstrous invasion of their rights. Silvester Horne had been in the vanguard of the fight against the Education Acts, and he had passively resisted it by refusing to pay the new education rates; but he felt the urgent necessity of securing a strong Free Church element in the next Parliament to insist on the repeal or amendment of the obnoxious Acts. The return of a Liberal Government was a certainty; but Horne was afraid that the main election issue would be Mr. Chamberlain's Tariff Reform, and he suspected, I think, that some Liberals, though sound Free Traders, might shirk a real fight on education.

When we were playing golf one day at Mitcham, Horne suddenly asked me, "Don't you think the Free Churches ought to put up a hundred candidates at the next election?" "I suppose you mean to make sure of getting a good Education Act," I replied. "Exactly," answered Horne, "if we are not represented by our own people we may get 'let down.'" The upshot of our talk was that (through the *Christian World*, the proprietors of which led off with a contribution of £500) a campaign fund was raised to help Free Church candidates at the election. Silvester Horne used his influence to the uttermost to persuade Free Churchmen who might otherwise have stood aloof to become candidates. When the scheme was well in progress I went, at Silvester Horne's suggestion, to see Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who was then chief Liberal whip, to ascertain what constituencies were still without candidates, and to offer to provide some Free Churchmen to fight what might be regarded as forlorn hope seats. Mr. Gladstone was not enthusiastic. My impression was that



as chief whip he did not want to be encumbered with men with bees in their bonnets over one issue. Naturally his ideal candidate would be a thorough-going party Liberal who would obey the crack of the whip on any and every question. The secretary of the National Free Church Council (Rev. Thomas Law) came into the Free Church candidate campaign at this stage, and the Liberal whip's department changed its attitude and thenceforward welcomed our crusade.

In the autumn of 1905 I communicated on behalf of the *Christian World* with every prospective Liberal candidate, seeking for a specific declaration of his views on the Education Act. I sent out a sort of "Who's Who" schedule of inquiries, one of which was, "Are you a Free Churchman?" The replies were a source of infinite amusement. It was perfectly astonishing to find how eager those Liberal candidates of 1905 were to claim the slightest possible probable association with the Free Churches. Men who had always relied on their wives' church membership to get them into heaven woke up to the political advantage for the moment of having some slender link with Methodism, or Congregationalism, or Presbyterianism. To resist a spasm of cynicism was impossible in reading the answers to that questionnaire. I link that experience of the 1906 election with the story of a politician who went down to a constituency with a view to being selected as its candidate for a bye-election. He addressed a meeting of the electors, and sought, through his speech, to discover the prevailing religious tendency of the constituency. "My great grandfather," he said, "was an Episcopalian [stony silence], but my great grandmother belonged to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland [continued silence]. My grandfather was a Baptist [more silence], but my grandmother was a Congregationalist [still frigid silence]. But I had a great aunt who was a Wesleyan Methodist [loud applause] and—and I have



always followed my great aunt [loud and prolonged cheering].” He got in.

When the election came in 1906 a motor-car campaign on behalf of the Free Church candidates was all ready, and a wealth of literature on the education question had been prepared. The result of the election was a great Liberal triumph at the polls, the return to the House of Commons of the largest body of Free Church M.P.s in English history, and at long last an absolute failure by the Liberal Government to effect any sort of improvement for Free Churchmen in the realm of State-provided education. We know now that even Mr. Birrell’s Bill was so mauled by the Cabinet before its presentation to the House that Mr. Birrell himself scarcely recognized his offspring. Horne’s disappointment was intense; and he was almost as chagrined over the subsequent failures of Mr. McKenna and Mr. Runciman to do anything real to redeem the election promises on education.

Mr. Silvester Horne’s decision three years later to stand for Parliament did not surprise me. The House of Commons appealed to him; but Whitefields enthralled him. Dr. J. H. Jowett persuaded Silvester Horne that he might stand as a Liberal candidate, and even sit in the House of Commons, without relinquishing his superintendency of Whitefields. I wrote to Horne expressing my fearfulness lest Parliament might wean him away from Whitefields. He replied by return—which was not by any means his invariable custom :

MY DEAR PORRITT,—I was on the point of writing to you when your letter arrived. Let me thank you again and again for your most generous words in the *Sunday at Home*. They say it will win Ipswich. Anyway, it did profoundly touch both my wife and myself, and I know it will greatly help our work all over the country. No, nothing will induce me to give up Whitefields. I do not believe it is impossible to combine the

two and to keep the religious interest foremost in both places. I do not believe the House of Commons need unmake one spiritually nor Whitefields unfit one for things secular. If these things, which all my life I have believed, prove to have no foundation, the bottom is out of my creed.

With renewed thanks and best wishes for 1910,

Ever yours affectionately,

C. SILVESTER HORNE.

Deep down in his heart Silvester Horne believed that there was no separation of the secular and the sacred. The two had so to mingle that the sacred permeated the secular in life. He lived by that faith, and it explained the way he thrust his religion into his politics and his politics into his religion. They were, to him, one and indivisible. Yet he never talked politics in the pulpit, though it was often said that he did. At Whitefields he comforted the saints (never very numerous, judging by the size of the congregation) in the morning, treated all questions under the sun—politics included—from the New Testament standpoint at the Men's Meeting in the afternoon, and always preached an evangelistic sermon which would have gladdened the heart of Dwight L. Moody in the evening. But, truly, to Silvester Horne politics and religion were two interwoven instruments for promoting the Kingdom of God on earth.

Silvester Horne might perhaps have made a success of his combination of a ministerial and a parliamentary life—he really had more leisure as an M.P., since his duties at Westminster tied him to London and prevented his endless itinerations in the country—but he found his officials at Whitefields antagonistic to his dual career. One or two London newspapers assailed him for the political complexion of his Sunday afternoon's men's meeting. Horne did not care two straws for their criticisms, but some members of the Whitefields Council cared



a good deal. In all his ministry Horne had never before had anything but steadfast support inside his church, and the antagonism of his officials distressed him. Eventually he gave a pledge that there would be no more politics at Whitefields. A member of the Council, in his presence, at once said that he would give £50 as a thankoffering to the mission funds. Horne was gravely disturbed, not to say wounded in spirit. A few months later he resigned his superintendency, and turned away from Whitefields a sorrowful man.

What was the secret of Silvester Horne's captivating charm? How came he to exercise so much power over men? For it was with men that he was most influential. Women were not drawn to him, and he cared little for their society. I think his power over men was in the magnetism of his radiant character and his infectious joy in living. He was in the very best sense of the term a man's man, with a healthy body, a healthy mind and a healthy soul. He shrank from nothing that was not unclean. To him life was a gorgeous adventure—a vagabondage in quest of the infinite. When he was at Kensington he confessed (in his diary) that he would "give a good slice of the dignity of Allen Street for some almost devil-may-care enthusiasm and hot-headed fanatical madness of Paul's sort." He loved adventurers and hated merely sticky negative goodness. Conventions, he thought, were things to be stamped upon, and ruts the path to the end of all things. How many times did he say that between a groove and a grave there was only a distinction in depth! He was a Christian *bon vivant* overflowing with joy of life.

I detected in Silvester Horne's last years a tinge of disappointment over both men and affairs. The House of Commons is the most disillusionizing institution in the King's realm, and it was not without its influence on Horne. Then he was distressed at the sagging moral energy of



the Free Churches. He told me just before he went off to America that he did not think he would either return to the Congregational ministry or try to retain his seat in the House of Commons. It seemed to him, he indicated, that as a dynamic of righteousness the Brotherhood movement presented the best field open to him for his last years, and he thought he might throw himself into its international work. His perplexity was tragically solved by the sudden death that overtook him when walking hand in hand with his wife on the deck of the steamer that was conveying him from Niagara to Toronto. In that he escaped the long-drawn agony of the European war one may say "*felix opportunitate mortis.*"

## CHAPTER IX

W. T. STEAD AND HUGH PRICE HUGHES

YOUNG journalists lost a very good friend when W. T. Stead went down in the *Titanic*. I owe him incalculable debts for immeasurable personal kindnesses to me. Stead was a great encourager to youngsters, and I never sought his counsel without getting it, freely given. He had just come out of prison (where he went "all on account of Eliza," as he used to say) when I came to London, and he often said that without a term in prison a journalist's education was incomplete. In conversation he would say, "When I was in prison I . . ." as if he gloried in his incarceration. Really he did glory in it. Every year he gathered a few intimate friends to dinner on the anniversary of his sentence, and for the occasion wore a prison suit, with the broad arrows splashed all over it. Stead's genius was often overshadowed by his erraticisms. He was capable of almost superhuman feats of writing. One night, deceived by an old time-table, he missed a train by which he intended starting for Russia. Deciding to go by the morning train next day, he determined to stay the night at his office at Mowbray House. He asked his business manager, Mr. Edwin Stout, if he wanted anything for the "Books for the Bairns" series. When told that "copy" was needed, Stead sat down, and, writing through the night, produced his "New Testament for Children," including a Life of Jesus and the story of the early Church. The "copy" awaited Mr. Stout on his desk next morning.

Stead's knowledge of the Bible would have put some bishops to shame. He could finish from memory almost

any verse from Scripture, the first half of which was given to him, and the bewildering names of obscure Scriptural characters had literally no terrors for him. His conversation was fascinating. He knew everybody, and was interested in everything, and he threw an explosive energy into the talk that was both captivating and overwhelming. His idea of a conversation was to have another man to listen to him. When he "interviewed" Silvester Horne at the time Whitefields was being established as an audacious central mission, Stead and Horne spent two hours together at the National Liberal Club. Stead did all the talking. He was full of ideas for Horne to put into operation in his Tottenham Court Road Tabernacle, and he did not give Horne a chance to explain his own plans. But the article which Stead wrote on Whitefields was excellent reading.

I remember going to see Stead just before the Torrey-Alexander Mission opened at the Albert Hall. He had received enthusiastic reports about the American Evangelists from Australian correspondents, and he had gone up to Liverpool to meet Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander before they came to London. He was confident that they would "move" London as he believed that they had "moved" Melbourne. He wrote an ecstatic article about the two men for the *Christian World*, and he threw himself into the Albert Hall campaign with all the exuberant zest which he commanded. The next time I saw him he was cursing Dr. Torrey with the utmost vehemence. Torrey had assailed the moral character of Tom Paine, and even when it had been proved to demonstration that he had done injustice to a dead man, he would not withdraw what he had said. Stead lost all patience with him and dropped Torrey-Alexander as if they were hot cinders. W. T. himself did not relish being convicted of an error. Some of his swans proved to be geese; but he hated having to confess that he had been duped. I had a very slight part in proving that he had been grossly deceived by a young lady



about whose romantic life story he had prepared an "extra" for the *Review of Reviews*. He believed in her *bona fides* and avowed his determination to go on with the publication. Only by careful investigations was an accumulation of evidence gathered exploding the fiction to which Stead was pledging his reputation. Even when, against his will, he had to acknowledge that he had been utterly deceived, he was much more exasperated against those responsible for the exposure than against the young lady who had victimized him. Stead's faith in womanhood was unconquerable.

In matters of business Stead was a child. He could never manage even his personal finances, and he never attempted to manage the finances of the *Review of Reviews*. When his partnership with Sir George Newnes in the *Review of Reviews* was dissolved, Stead found himself in an awkward financial plight. He called to his aid his friend Mr. Edwin Stout, then Hugh Price Hughes's managing editor of the *Methodist Times*, and Mr. Stout had to pluck Stead's chestnuts out of the fire. It was an almost superhuman task, but it was carried through.

Stead never allowed the counting-house to influence his editorial policy on anything. In this he cut across a growing habit in journalism. If a course of procedure struck Stead as right, he went ahead whatever might be the consequences to either the circulation or the advertising revenue of the *Review*. His violent stand against the Boer War, for example, almost bankrupted the *Review of Reviews*; but Stead never turned a hair. The anxieties always fell upon Mr. Stout, whose managerial genius carried Stead through crisis after crisis. Stead never had a cheque-book of his own. He left it all to Mr. Stout. Even the weekly domestic cheque for the Stead household was signed by the manager of the *Review of Reviews*. When Stead died all his friends assumed that by his will he would make Mr. Stout the controlling spirit of the *Review*, but he had

made no such provision. The family parted with Mr. Stout light-heartedly — with consequences that came speedily.

I saw W. T. Stead a few days before he sailed on his last ill-fated voyage. He was full of the *Titanic*, the unsinkable ship, and seemed quite convinced that man the shipbuilder could snap his fingers at the terrors of the raging sea. I have often wondered what Stead was doing when the *Titanic* went down. Almost certainly, I feel, he was conducting a prayer meeting among the steerage. He had an unshakable belief in direct answer to prayer—a childlike faith. His favourite hymn was Newton's "Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near," which contains four lines peculiarly apposite to the circumstances of his death :

His love in times past  
Forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last  
In trouble to sink.

The governing principle of Stead's whole life was his sensitiveness to wrong. No Puritan "Father" was more "conscious of sin," and he had a Gladstonian sensitiveness about wronged men and peoples.

Hugh Price Hughes was at his zenith when I began my journalistic career in London. Stead once called Hughes "a Day of Judgment in breeches," and the description was apt, if rather cruel. One of my early engagements was to report that tremendous onslaught made by Hugh Price Hughes upon Charles Stewart Parnell after the Divorce Court verdict on the O'Shea case. When really moved Hughes spoke with terrific vehemence. The violence with which he struck the hand-rail to emphasize his points often caused the Press table to vibrate. Sir J. M. Barrie tells of an Auld Licht preacher who hammered the Bible so hard



when preaching that the kirk had to have a standing contract with the carpenter to repair the pulpit once a month. Hughes's vehemence in gesture makes Barrie's story credible. One might almost say that Hugh Price Hughes made actual history by that Parnell outburst and by his trenchant leading article in the *Methodist Times* on the following Thursday. "Of course Parnell must go," was the unequivocal opening sentence of the famous Hughes leader. He drove Parnell out of British politics, and delayed Irish Home Rule for thirty years. Mr. Gladstone accepted Hughes's declaration "that what is morally wrong can never be politically right," as the authentic voice of the Nonconformist conscience on the Parnell scandal. And, bowing before the storm, he let it be known that Parnell would have to go.

The phrase "the Nonconformist Conscience" came into use through Hughes's oration. It was first used by the *Times* in its leading article on Hugh Price Hughes's protest against Parnell's continuance after the Divorce Court exposé. We scarcely ever hear the phrase now. Dr. Orchard says that it went into cold storage when the war broke out in 1914, and has been given only an occasional airing since. Mr. Sidney Berry has said that the Nonconformist Conscience is now at Lambeth Palace.

If Hugh Price Hughes did not originate the Nonconformist Conscience, he for years was its most conspicuous mouthpiece. The St. James's Hall Conference was, par excellence, the platform for the discussion of moral issues, and Hugh Price Hughes had the knack of catching the ear of the press. He knew the exact value of publicity then, as Mr. Lloyd George knows it to-day. He laid it down as a rule of guidance for the stewards at his St. James's Hall Conferences that pressmen must be shown every courtesy. "If a duke and a reporter come here together," he said, "and there is only one seat left, it must be given to the reporter." As a whirling



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rhetorician Hugh Price Hughes was unrivalled in his day. He had a shrill, penetrating voice. He spoke, when roused, at a tremendous pace, and his adjectival vehemence was like a cannonade. Hughes had a strong strain of Jewish blood in his ancestry, and this, mingled with the Welsh stock from which he sprang, made him a complex personality. He never attracted me to him by any grace or charm of manner. I served for a time on an education committee upon which he was a leading figure, and the impression he made upon my mind was of an arbitrary man who would have his way even if he had to browbeat everybody who differed from him. He was an intellectual militarist. By instinct he was narrow, but he honestly tried, I think, to take broader views than were his own by temperament. He used to say that a man may be as orthodox as the devil and twice as wicked, but in his heart of hearts he simply loathed a Unitarian like the very devil. I often thought he preferred an atheist. More than anybody else, Hugh Price Hughes established the policy that banned Unitarians from any association with the Free Church Council, though as that Council came into being to do evangelistic work, Unitarians make too much of a grievance of their exclusion from co-operative work in which they would not be happy. Sometimes Hugh Price Hughes compelled one to believe that he had no hope for the salvation of anyone but Wesleyan Methodists, and not very much hope for them. After a visit, during a spell of ill-health, to the Surrey Hills, he came back to London and publicly declared that that quarter of England was spiritually destitute. What he meant was that Wesleyan Methodism was not triumphantly prosperous there.

Hugh Price Hughes's work in the West London Mission was a piece of pioneering in religious enterprise that set a radiant example to other denominations. Though he founded the *Methodist Times* as an organ of progres-

sive Methodism, and made it detested by reactionary Methodists (they dubbed it the "Boys' Own Paper"). Hughes was not really a great journalist. He had "flair," and his sharp staccato style was arresting. His literary vice was screaming. He went out, as Americans say, "armed with buckshot to kill humming birds"; and his weak sense of perspective made him rage in the same hyperbolical frenzy over a trifling point of order in a Methodist synod as over a gross moral abuse in high politics. It was always the Nasmyth hammer cracking Barcelona nuts. With Hugh Price Hughes there were no gradations—he was deficient in all sense of chiaroscuro.

Death came to Hugh Price Hughes as a happy release, though he was still a comparatively young man. He had squandered his physical and nervous resources with both hands as a preacher, missionary and writer. His heart was affected by overwork, but what distressed him in his last days—and no doubt accelerated his death—was a miserable squabble that arose over a little impromptu dance in which some of the Sisters of the West London Mission had indulged in one of the mission halls. The affair was as innocent as it could be. Hughes would not have sanctioned it, perhaps, but in the circumstances he would not have been unduly disturbed by the little—shall I call it?—indiscretion. But news of the dancing having taken place reached the ears of a prominent London Methodist layman, who raised an ugly furore over the affair. Hugh Price Hughes, in delicate health, and with his morbid sensitiveness to any criticism of the West London Mission, worried terribly over this storm in a teacup. It preyed upon him—all the more because he was off the scene trying to resuscitate his health in the country. He died in a cab as he drove away from a meeting at Sion College.

On the morning after his death I got up at six o'clock to play a before-breakfast round of golf with my friend and neighbour, Mr. Arthur P. Grubb, then assistant



editor of the *Methodist Times*, and a colleague in close association with Hugh Price Hughes. Just as we were leaving my house with our golf sticks slung over our shoulders the newsboy left the *Daily News* at the door.

"Wait a second," I said. "Just let us see if anything has happened."

I opened the paper, and the first thing that met my eye was, "Death of Hugh Price Hughes." We walked in silence to the first tee and played, if I remember rightly, one hole. Then we walked home again. Without exchanging a word about it, we both felt that golf was impossible that morning.

Another great Wesleyan Methodist—to whom Hugh Price Hughes owed many a debt for suggestions—was the late Samuel T. Collier, who, by inaugurating the Manchester Central Mission, taught Methodists how to run their down-town missions. "Sam" Collier was a man for whom I had a profound regard. He was a very big soul. Intellectually he was commonplace, but he had a genius for organization, and, above all—and this lay beneath the success of his Manchester Mission—a profound faith that no human being could fall so low that he could not be restored by the love of Christ ministered through other human beings. This made him see redemption feasible in the meanest human derelicts. He gave every man or woman who sought his aid another chance. Collier had no patience with

Organized charity measured and iced  
In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ.

I spent three days investigating the methods of work in the Manchester Mission. To see Collier in his office interviewing "down and outers" was a study in the art of discerning character. He admitted that much of the



work of the Central Mission was work that the Manchester municipality should have done out of the rates, but his argument was that if done in an official way by the city council the work would be deficient in the uplifting touch which religious passion gave to it. Collier did a giant's work for nearly forty years, and died in harness. His death had a glorious side to it. He was, he thought, recovering, when his heart gave out, and he knew the end had come. Quietly raising himself in bed, he asked his wife and two sons to join him in singing the Doxology, and with "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" on his lips he greeted the unseen.

## CHAPTER X

### DR. PARKER

**I**F genius is an intuitive gift and not, as Carlyle said, "a capacity for taking infinite pains," Dr. Parker was assuredly a genius. Outside this hypothesis of genius there was no explaining his extraordinary personality. He had no early advantages. Heredity and environment combined in fighting against him in childhood, and he was denied the advantage of a systematic education. But (as Dr. Reaveley Glover has said) "genius has a gift of doing without." One may even doubt if Dr. Parker ever read widely. Like Abraham Lincoln, who said he had read less and thought more than most men of his time, Joseph Parker was an original in mind and habit. He repelled and fascinated at one and the same time. At once he was egotistical and simple as a child. Dr. Forsyth, whose wit was sometimes cruel, once said that "At one time I thought Dr. Parker was a good man touched with egotism; I have come to believe that he is an egotist touched with goodness." The judgment was harsh; but Dr. Parker always drew the lightning. Men either believed in him implicitly or voted him a poseur and a charlatan. He was a Protean character with Jekyll and Hyde always at war within him. I can imagine that he never saw a man-brute without saying, "There, but for the grace of God, goes Joseph Parker."

Newspaper reporters often did Dr. Parker a dis-service by reporting his *obiter dicta* without giving their context. His famous objurgation of the Sultan was an instance. A Congregational minister travelling in East Anglia got

into conversation with a clergyman in the train. When he mentioned that he was a Congregationalist the clergyman said, "Let me see, Dr. Parker is a Congregationalist, isn't he?" The minister assented. "And he's the man who said 'God damn the Sultan,' isn't he?" If the minister had had the context of the famous utterance even the clergyman might have excused Dr. Parker's outburst. This was the offending passage:

"When I heard that the Kaiser went to the East and in an after-dinner speech said, 'My friend the Sultan,' I was astonished. I could have sat down in humiliation and terror. The Great Assassin had insulted civilization and outraged every Christian sentiment, and defied concerted Europe. He may have been the Kaiser's friend; he was not yours, he was not mine, he was not God's. Down with such speaking! So long as any man can say 'My friend the Sultan' I wish to have no commerce or friendship with that man. The Sultan drenched the lands with blood, cut up men, women and children, spared none, ripped up the womb, bayoneted the old, and did all manner of hellish iniquity. He may have been the Kaiser's friend, but in the name of God, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost—speaking of the Sultan not merely as a man, but speaking of him as the Great Assassin—I say 'God damn the Sultan!'"

Spoken sixteen years later these words would not, perhaps, have jarred on the war minds of England. The British Government's propaganda department would have made good use of them.

Dr. Parker was just completing his "People's Bible" when I came first in contact with him. It was a stupendous feat—an exposition of the whole Bible. Dr. Parker was not an exegetist in the scholarly sense. Dr. Vaughan Pryce, Principal of New College, was believed to do Dr. Parker's "Delitzsching" for him; but Dr. Parker did his own "Matthew Henry-ing." His knowledge of the



English Bible was rare in its comprehensiveness. He used to be credited with sitting for hours in his study tapping an open Bible with his finger-tips and murmuring : "This is history—exhausts all history ! This is poetry—exhausts all poetry ! This is truth—exhausts all truth." He made the English Bible luminous, not so much by detailed exposition as by lightning flashes of intuitive insight that pierced to the very heart of a text. An old lady who attended Dr. Parker's ministry once went into his vestry to thank him for the inspiration he gave her. "You do throw such wonderful light on the Bible, doctor," she said. "Do you know that until this morning I had always thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were man and wife ? "

At the request of the late John Lobb Dr. Parker once edited the *Evening Sun* for a week ; but the "stunt"—we did not call them stunts in those days—was not a startling success. In fact he did not keep it up for the week. This was not Dr. Parker's first essay in editorship. At one time he owned and edited a paper called the *Fountain*, but the venture failed. I remember Dr. Parker telling me about his experiences as editor. "I had a sub-editor," he said, "and he used to bring me proof sheets of the paper. There would be little spaces at the foot of the columns to be filled up, and at first I left him to write the paragraphs to fill up the spaces. My sub-editor did not like the Congregational Union officials, and when the paper came out the paragraphs would all be little digs at the secretaries. I said to him, ' Young man, if you have a grievance against the Congregational Union get a barrel of gunpowder and blow up the Memorial Hall. Don't fling cherry stones at the windows.' " And with a flick of his thumb—like a schoolboy shooting a marble—he suited the action to the word.

In controversy Dr. Parker did not shine. He always left terribly vulnerable gaps in his own armour. Half way

through a prolonged controversy it seemed as if he got bored with the whole thing and gave away all he had won. But once in a sharp exchange of letters he scored off Mr. Spurgeon. "Let me advise you," wrote Parker, "to widen the circle of which you are the centre. You are surrounded by offerers of incense. They flatter your weaknesses; they laugh at your jokes; they feed you with compliments. My dear Spurgeon, you are too big a man for this. Take in more fresh air. Open your windows, even when the wind is in the east. Scatter your ecclesiastical harem. I do not say destroy your circle. I simply say enlarge it. As with your circle so with your reading."

Mrs. Morgan Richards, mother of "John Oliver Hobbes" (Mrs. Craigie), was a devoted admirer of Dr. Parker, and Dr. Parker, who somehow drew children to him, was very fond of the little girl. When grown up Mrs. Craigie became a Roman Catholic. She wrote herself to Dr. Parker, saying that she had adopted the "saint's name" and in future would sign herself "Pearl Maria Teresa Craigie." Dr. Parker replied in a kindly note—signing himself "Joseph Matthew Mark Luke John Parker."

Stories quite *ben trovato* circulated by the score about Dr. Parker, and many of them libelled his really extraordinary wit. When you listened to him preaching the occasional flashes of humour lighted up the sermon; but it would be a very unjust estimate of Dr. Parker to suggest that he owed his world reputation either to his wit or his eccentricities. His personality was a mighty thing. It might repel you or it might fascinate you, but I do not think anyone ever heard Dr. Parker and went away thinking no more of what the preacher had said.

Occasionally Dr. Parker, when talking with an intimate, would fall into religiosity. One day a friend asked him how his last book was selling. In his pompous way Dr. Parker, who evidently wanted to convey the impression



that a book like his called for judgment by a far higher tribunal than its sales, replied: "The final test of a book, my friend, is——" "The royalty account!" interjected the friend impiously. "Exactly! Exactly!" was Dr. Parker's rejoinder. He saw fiction would not go down.

I once heard Dr. Parker, speaking, he said, on behalf of his deacons, complain of the collections at the City Temple midday services on Thursdays. He hated to speak of money, he said, and he did not believe that habitués of the City Temple meant to evade their duty. "It is all the fault of the fog," he said in his most insinuating tones. "It gets into the church and blurs your eyes, so that when the deacon comes with the collection-box you mistake it for a hymn-book and say, 'No, thank you. I've got one.'"

The most characteristic thing I ever heard him say was a prefatory note to one of his Thursday morning sermons. He said he approached the duty of preaching that morning with trepidation, because he had had a letter from a gentleman saying that he was coming to the City Temple that day to make a philosophical analysis of the sermon. After a long pause Dr. Parker added, "I may add that my trepidation is somewhat mitigated by the fact that the gentleman spells philosophical with an f."

When Dr. Burford Hooke became editor of the *Independent and Nonconformist* Dr. Parker promised an occasional contribution to its columns. And he kept the promise—at least once. Then when Dr. Parker promoted his Mansion House conference on London's spiritual needs, he sought Dr. Hooke's aid in "booming" the conference. I interviewed Dr. Parker about it and published the interview in the *Independent and Nonconformist*. Moreover, I had the conference reported verbatim, and the report appeared in a supplement to the paper—published on the day after the conference, which was held on a Wednesday. At his Thursday midday service next day Dr. Parker urged



his hearers to buy the *Independent and Nonconformist*, which he said contained the fullest account of the meeting. "I have no interest in the paper," he said. "I have never seen it before; but this report is a feat of energy, enterprise and ingenuity, which I feel I must bring under your notice."

I heard Dr. Parker add his postscript to the Acts of the Apostles. It was about the time that Jabez Spencer Balfour had gone to prison over the Liberator frauds. Dr. Parker had lost money in that bubble and was very sore about it. His postscript, which he read at one of his Thursday midday services, was never, I think, published. It began: "And St. Paul, standing on the steps of his own cathedral, infinitely greater than the sacred pile itself, cried, 'O, ye men of London, I perceive that with all your sagacity you are putting money into bags with holes in them, for on the way here I saw a shrine marked, "Liberator; houses builded on the sand." ' " He made St. Paul protest against pleasant Sunday afternoons, and expressed a wish to make some men's Sunday afternoons "decidedly unpleasant." Altogether it was a daring Parkerism in very doubtful taste, but unconscionably clever, in its mimicry of New Testament phraseology.

Stories of Dr. Parker and "gems" from Dr. Parker's sermons (many of them invented) were at one time the stock-in-trade of Nonconformist humorists. Certainly he often said very unexpected things in the pulpit. He had a playwright's eye for a climax. Once in a sermon on bringing up a child in the way he should go (he threw all the emphasis on the pronoun *he*), Dr. Parker asked how a child should be trained in sabbath observance. He pictured Sunday in a stern sabbatarian home: "Rise at seven, family prayers. Breakfast at eight o'clock, Sunday school at nine, church at ten-thirty, then home to cold dinner. One hour of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,' then Sunday school at two. Home to tea, then another hour

of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,' then hymns round the pianoforte. Then evening church followed by cold supper, more hymns round the pianoforte, family prayers. Then to bed. Bring up a child in the way *he* should go, and when he grows old he will not depart from it." (A long pause.) Then in his loudest voice: "*Won't he?*"

Dr. Parker managed his financial affairs astutely. But he sank half his fortune in his last years upon an annuity upon the joint lives of himself and his wife. Mrs. Parker died before him and the blow shattered his happiness.

He was really a very lonely man, partially from shyness and partially from his habit of holding aloof from his ministerial *confrères*. In Mrs. Parker he found an absorbing companion and a very wise counsellor, especially in the supervision of his correspondence. How many breaches of friendship she must have spared him by getting him to "sleep over" a letter he had written and then persuading him to tear it up in the morning. I heard Dr. Parker preach at the Thursday service a fortnight after her death, and saw him shake with bitter sobbing as he read to his congregation her burial certificate with the words, "Unconsecrated ground," printed on the form. After Mrs. Parker's death Dr. Parker immured himself in his home at Hampstead. The zest for life had gone out of him. The only flame left burning in him was his passion for preaching. That he never lost.

## CHAPTER XI

NEWMAN HALL, MCLAREN, BERRY

DR. NEWMAN HALL was a very old man, somewhere about eighty, and an extinct volcano when I came into immediate contact with him. He found it very hard to retire. With old age vanity grew upon him, as it often does with aged men when they feel their life work is done and that they lag superfluous on the scene. At his own request I once interviewed him at Hampstead, and he spent the best part of a very long afternoon recalling his earlier triumphs on platforms and in pulpits. The secret of his popularity evaded me. His intellectual force was never notable, and his eloquence was thin. His famous tract, "Come to Jesus," had a good title for that period. Somehow Dr. Newman Hall gained a large following, and Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, is an ornate monument to his influence in South London. He once crept into Tennyson's garden near Freshwater, and emerging suddenly from a bush intercepted the Poet Laureate as he was strolling dreamily down one of the paths. Tennyson looked at the card with which the intruder introduced himself. Then handing it back he said brusquely, "I do not know Surrey Chapel, and I don't want to know Dr. Newman Hall." A year or two before he died Dr. Newman Hall wrote to the editor of the *Christian World* saying that he understood that advance obituaries of public men were kept in type in newspaper offices, and adding that if the editor had his (Dr. Newman Hall's) obituary notice prepared he would be pleased in the interests of accuracy to revise it himself. The strange request was complied with. Quite a number of public men must have involun-



tarily read their own obituaries, prematurely published (owing, as Mark Twain said, to some rumour of their death having been grossly exaggerated), but Dr. Newman Hall is, as far as I know, the only man who ever sought the privilege.

Dr. Alexander McLaren gave me the first interview he had ever given to a newspaper man. I fancy it was the only time he ever was formally interviewed. I was writing a series of articles for the *Temple Magazine* (founded and edited by my old friend Mr. F. A. Atkins) on "Churches That Live and Move," and we were especially anxious to include Union Chapel, Manchester, in the sequence. Dr. McLaren was reluctant to be interviewed or photographed in his study. "By the grace of God," he wrote, "I have so far escaped the noisome pestilence of the interviewer." Under a little gentle pressure he relaxed and asked me to visit him at Manchester. I went up on the date fixed, but Dr. McLaren had been taken ill just as he was leaving Niton—a spot in the Isle of Wight of which he was very fond—for Manchester, so my journey was in vain. I wrote to Dr. McLaren after an interval and again sought an interview. This time he replied in a very cordial letter agreeing to my request, but forbidding me to make another special journey to Manchester as he would shortly be in London and would arrange to give me an hour or two there. The interview took place in a Southampton Row temperance hotel—in a rather dingy parlour. Dr. McLaren was lying on a sofa, just recovering from a severe attack of dysentery and looking very old and worn. But in a few minutes he was talking with the utmost vivacity, with his eyes sparkling and his whole face aglow with eagerness. In repose Dr. McLaren's normal expression was hard, dour, almost sardonic; but in a flash, if something interested or pleased him, his countenance broke into a perfectly heavenly smile

—the sort of smile that lingers in memory as something imperishable. Dr. McLaren was rather an exasperating subject for an interviewer. He said the most interesting things, downright indiscreet things (which, of course, make the best “copy”), but having said them he would purse his lips in a roguish way and say, “I’m thinking that that will not have to go into the interview: you’ll leave it out, won’t you?” I recall one thing he said, which he was reluctant at first to have published. We were talking about the autonomous government of Baptist and Congregational Churches, its advantages and its drawbacks, and he suddenly rapped out, with mischief in his twinkling eyes, “But democracy always has drawbacks. Democracy is *only* the finest governmental system the world has seen *when it has a splendid autocrat at the head of it.*”

After this meeting in London I frequently saw Dr. McLaren in London and in Manchester, and we had some irregular correspondence. In any business relations over his books Dr. McLaren knew how to make a bargain. His wealth came mainly from his book royalties. His will, and the fortune he left surprised his Baptist friends. I once heard an ex-president of the Baptist Union say in a very severe tone, “Don’t mention Alexander McLaren to me! He died a very wealthy man and did not leave a penny to any Baptist charity or denominational cause.” At one time Dr. McLaren’s volumes of sermons went into most ministers’ libraries. They were mines of rich illustrative ore for preachers. But I scarcely ever see a McLaren volume on a minister’s bookshelves nowadays. His close expository method of preaching may have gone out of fashion, but it might be revived with advantage. As a preacher Dr. McLaren, among many greater qualities, had an amazing power of perfectly withering irony. I can hear him now in imagination, hissing out some scathingly ironical phrase



and see his thin lips exploding as he finished the sentence.

Few Free Church ministers have left happier memories behind them than Dr. Charles Albert Berry of Wolverhampton. It is nearly a quarter of a century since he died, and he was only forty-six at the time of his death, but his name lives and a fragrant atmosphere pervades all remembrances of him. An invitation to succeed Henry Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, projected Dr. Berry into universal fame, but it did not spoil him. He never pretended that he was a preacher of the Beecher calibre, but I think he enjoyed the popularity that came through Beecher's nomination of him as his own successor. The Free Churches are murderous in their demands on their popular men, and Charles Albert Berry's sudden popularity really cost him his life. Preaching, speaking and travelling wore him out prematurely. My own idea was, however, that Dr. Berry exhausted his vitality less by preaching and speaking than by spending so much energy on vivacious talk after his engagements. Berry thought—and I think he was right—that good conversation is the best fun in this world, and given a congenial host and a few listeners he would sit up talking till the small hours of the morning. A late night with Dr. Berry was a thing to be remembered. His talk was racy, and he was a rare raconteur. He used to tell with gusto a story of one of his deacons coming one morning into his study, very irate and waving a *Wolverhampton Star* in his hand. "Dr. Berry, have you see what the *Star* says this morning?" he asked.

"No. What does it say?" asked Dr. Berry.

The deacon read the opening passage of the leader, which began in this strain: "Dr. Charles Berry, who is paid £800 a year by Queen Street Church for preaching what he does not practise, etc."



"What shall we do about it?" asked the aggrieved deacon.

Dr. Berry paused as if thinking seriously, and then replied: "Well, I suppose you'll have to make it eight hundred!"

Before settling at Wolverhampton Dr. Berry was a minister at Bolton, and he loved to tell Lancashire stories. He could mimic the dialect perfectly. He used to tell of a prayer meeting in a Lancashire church when a working man offered a prayer, in which he said: "O Lord, Thou hast tried me in many ways, Thou hast tried me with sickness and with sorrow, with my wife and with my work; but if Thou art going to try me any more, try me, if it pleases Thee, with a bit o' brass." *more*

In the initiation of the National Free Church Council Dr. Berry exercised a great influence. He stumped England on its behalf. He had a natural gift of eloquence. Indeed, his fluency of speech was a snare to him, tempting him to shirk preparation of his speeches. "I can always go on saying something till I have something to say," he said once. When he was Chairman of the Congregational Union he left the preparation of his address (which is an ex cathedra utterance upon which most chairmen bestow infinite pains) until the very eve of its delivery. Then he rushed into the Memorial Hall, asked to be shown into an empty room, and, sitting down, wrote the whole address at a sitting. Moreover, it was an exceedingly good address. He died at the funeral of one of his own intimate friends.

Much of Dr. Berry's magnetic charm has descended to his own son, Rev. Sidney M. Berry, who succeeded Dr. J. H. Jowett at Carrs Lane Chapel, Birmingham, and is now one of the most attractive figures in the Free Churches.

Time has almost obliterated memories of the Grindelwald Conferences of thirty years ago on the Reunion of

the Churches, and I think Sir Henry Lunn is the sole surviving figure of the little earnest company that discussed Church unity under the shadow of the Wetterhorn. Dr. Charles Albert Berry, Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and Bishop Perowne of Worcester took the conferences very seriously, and all three were really perturbed at the apathy of English churchmen, Established and Free, over the pious picnic conferences in the Bernese Oberland. Back from one of the conventions, Dr. Berry told a good story of a rejoinder he made to Bishop Perowne one day. They were out walking one day, and as they climbed a gentle slope Dr. Perowne noticed Dr. Berry's sturdy figure and his stout knickerbockered legs. "You've a good pair of calves, Dr. Berry," said the bishop. "You'd do well for a bishop."

"There," replied Dr. Berry, "I've often wondered what qualifications are required for a bishop. I'm glad you've told me." Then Dr. Berry added slyly: "But, you know, Dr. Perowne, that puts another difficulty in the way of reunion, for in the Free Churches we make a point of selecting our leaders for their qualities at the other end."

## CHAPTER XII

J. G. STEVENSON AND DAN CRAWFORD

**E**VEN yet I entertain a hope that, belated though it will be, we shall have a biography of Rev. J. G. Stevenson of Brighton, Beckenham and Oxford—a young Congregational minister who was as distinctive a character as the Free Churches have ever produced. There were few things that Stevenson could not do. His versatility was amazing. He was an excellent preacher, the best speaker to children in his own time, a brilliant writer, an engaging platform speaker, a bit of a poet, a good deal of a humorist, a potential novelist—for though his first story, “The Uplifted Veil,” missed fire, another one which he never finished had real promise—and the author of one or two excellent historical studies as well as a monograph on temperament which was both recondite and amusing. Above all, Stevenson had the genius for friendship. Though dogged by ill-health, he raced through mountains of work and took a degree at the Royal University of Ireland while he was in charge of a large suburban church and in the midst of heavy literary commitments. He was a voracious reader, and he digested what he read. His habit was to grind at a book till he had mastered its contents. Then he dictated a précis of its contents to his typist. The very act of dictation, he used to say, fastened upon his mind whatever was worth remembering in a book. Stevenson always insisted that he got nothing worth having out of his theological college training. On the other hand, I have heard men who were at Hackney College with him declare that they got a very great deal out of Stevenson.



Unless a biography is given us of Stevenson, I imagine he will live in his first book, "The Christ of the Children." I am always proud to think I persuaded him to write that book. I had been seeking vainly for a Life of Jesus for my own small boys—a Life written in a vein free from the sickly sentimentality of most of the Jesus story books for children, and written also in the light of modern criticism, so that, without any direct reference to critical questions, the book would give children nothing of which they might have to unload their minds as their knowledge grew. I could find nothing of the kind, and I thought Stevenson could do one well. He caught the idea at once, and carried it out perfectly. It pleased both orthodox and heterodox people, and delighted the little people for whom it was written. Stevenson fell in with my suggestion that the illustrations should be reproductions of great masterpieces of religious art, but I had a struggle with him over Hoffmann's "Christ in Gethsemane," which he wanted included and which I rejected as too sentimental. He afterwards wrote a weekly column for children in the *Christian World*, and kept up an amazing level of interest and freshness for about ten years. This brought him letters from all over the world, and there must have been many sorrowful young hearts when he was cut off in quite early manhood.

Stevenson was the blithest soul I ever met. He was almost incredibly cheerful. When the mad mood came upon him he was a perfect imp of mischief. His field day was always the day when the Free Church ministers who golf played for their challenge cup and medals. Stevenson generally tore up his card about the third hole out in the first round, and then let himself go. His partner never won the cup either. After the contest the competitors usually repaired to Whitefields to drink the health of the victor from the challenge cup—flowing with steaming tea. Then Stevenson coruscated. One year, on cup day, he hit upon the idea of playing an elaborate joke on Mr. Silas

K. Hocking, the novelist, who, as an ex-minister, always competed (vainly) for the golf cup. Stevenson first dispatched a telegram to Mrs. Hocking announcing that her husband had won the cup. Later he got a telegram handed in at a post office at Crouch End addressed to Mr. Hocking at Whitefields, and purporting to come from the Mayor of Hornsey, congratulating the novelist on his victory and intimating that the Hornsey town band with the fire brigade would meet him by the 9.30 train to convey the cup home in triumph. Being at Whitefields when the telegram reached Mr. Hocking enabled Stevenson to carry the joke to further stages, till the complications of the affair simply left Mr. Hocking gasping. I think Silvester Horne was an accomplice before the fact. I know Rev. Thomas Yates was. The comedy dissolved in the utmost good humour. Mr. Silas Hocking can take a joke. Occasionally Stevenson's waggish ways annoyed ultra-serious folk who did not understand his temperament, but generally he was regarded with affection—which his generosity of spirit inspired.

Once I was golfing with him at Lewes when Alderman Carden of Brighton joined us. Mr. Carden was wearing a golfing suit made of cloth with a pattern of huge squares. Stevenson greeted the alderman with the question, "Where's the horse?" All the way round the links he would say, "It's your move, Carden," by way of suggesting that the alderman's coat was a chessboard. Alderman Carden, who was the first Socialist Mayor of Brighton—and an excellent mayor, too—enjoyed Stevenson's sallies, and scored a point or two very neatly in the exchange of good-natured persiflage.

Through Stevenson I made the acquaintance of Dan Crawford, that eccentric and lovable man who spent twenty-seven unbroken years in the long-grass area of Central Africa as a "Brethren" missionary to the Garangense people. Stevenson had brought together a com-



pany of Free Church ministers and laymen to meet Crawford at luncheon at the Strand Palace Hotel. Everyone present had read Dan Crawford's strange book, "Thinking Black," and all were so eager to ply him with questions that the luncheon hour extended until tea-time. When I was leaving I mentioned that I had Mr. Francis Seton Thompson, the "Wild Animals at Home" naturalist, dining with me that night at my club. Stevenson suggested that it would be great fun to bring Dan Crawford and Seton Thompson together, and we agreed to make a dinner party of four. It was one of the oddest séances in my experience. Mr. Seton Thompson could not make head nor tail of Mr. Dan Crawford, and Mr. Dan Crawford did not know what to make of Mr. Seton Thompson. Suddenly both began slanging civilization, and instantly they were as bosom friends—knit together, it seemed, by a common hate. Both men loved the wild and had heard its call in their souls, and, figuratively speaking, they fell on each other's necks on discovering that they both loathed the ways of cities and the dismal unsatisfying materialism of modern civilization.

Mr. Seton Thompson told a story of an old Indian whom he had brought down from one of the reservations to show him New York. He took the old red man down Broadway—"the Great White Way"—at night, took him over Brooklyn Bridge, took him on the overhead railway and in the underground railway, showed him, in fact, all the feverish ways of the great American city. At last he took the bewildered old Indian to the Grand Central dépôt to see him off back to his reservation. Not till then had he asked the old man what he thought of New York. Then he put the question. The old Indian thought in silence for a minute or two, and then replied: "Mr. Seton Thompson, in the land from which I come we have no bridges to span our great rivers, no great white ways to spoil the darkness of the night sky, no trains under the land and



over the land ; but we, Mr. Seton Thompson, we have peace of mind ! ”

Mr. Dan Crawford, delighted with the story, capped it with an even better. “I have lived,” he said, “so long in the long grass that I think like the blacks, and I never talk of Western European civilization. But just when I was coming home and was thinking perhaps tenderly of old scenes and faces, I did one night swank a bit about civilization to an old Bantu who was sitting with me in my hut. I told him that I was going to my own country, where they had ships that went under the water, other ships that went on the water, and still more ships that flew over the water. I told him that in English houses you turn a tap and the water flows, touched a button and the room was flooded with light—in fact, I gave him a good glowing description of all the alleged triumphs of civilization. When I had catalogued as much as I could remember I stopped and waited for the old negro to show his surprise. But the old negro just said :

“ ‘ Is that all, Mr. Crawford ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, I think it is,’ I replied. ”

“Then very slowly and very gravely the old Bantu said :

“ ‘ Well, Mr. Crawford, you know, to be better off is not to be better. ’ ”

Some years ago, just before the war, it was suggested to me that I should go out to the South Seas as one of a deputation to visit the London Missionary Society’s stations in the Pacific Islands and in New Guinea. I could not go, but I have always lamented that I could not. I feel that that journey would have settled a question which is always somewhere at the back of my mind—the question whether, if I had to make a choice, I would sooner be a working man in Poplar or a Papuan living in savagery in New Guinea. For the life of me I cannot answer the

question until I have seen Papua; but knowing Poplar, and having read a great deal about Papua, I cannot help thinking that the advantage lies with the savage. He may be haunted by dread of evil spirits, but he is not haunted by fear of unemployment, and all the horror that spells. And at least the Papuan basks in the sunshine and sees the blue sky, and if he has not heard of all the enriching conveniences and pleasures of civilized life, he is no worse off than the Poplar man, who hears of them all but enjoys none of them.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE HUMOURS OF PAGEANTRY

THE Free Churches have been shedding their austerities very rapidly in the last thirty years. The old dissenting prejudices against the theatre, cards, billiards, dancing and even boxing seem to be swiftly passing away. It was left to a professional stage manager, Mr. Hugh Moss, to boast (during the run of "The Pageant of Darkness and Light," staged at the Missionary Exhibition, "The Orient in London") that "the car of Thespis has been driven right through the camp of Nonconformity." Truly it had. I had some measure of responsibility for the production of that pageant, and I cannot pretend to be penitent about it. The committee which was promoting "The Orient in London" in the interests of the London Missionary Society decided to stage a pageant as a huge side-show. A sub-committee was entrusted with the production, and this sub-committee laid its plans on a very ambitious scale. Mr. John Oxenham, the novelist, undertook to write the libretto. Mr. Hugh Moss was engaged to produce the pageant. The music was entrusted to Mr. Hamish MacCunn, the distinguished composer and conductor. About ten weeks before the date for the opening of the exhibition the "Pageant of Darkness and Light" was—so far as the music was concerned—still in the brain of the composer. And all the other arrangements were in chaos. Mr. F. A. Atkins and I were asked to constitute ourselves as a committee of ways and means to deal with the pageant. And a frightful time we had over it. Mr. Stanley Holmes, now M.P. for N.E. Derbyshire and a rising hope of Independent Liberalism, shared the



burden with us. Up to that late hour the general committee believed that the pageant would be in dumb show, with no speaking on the stage. But when Mr. Atkins and I met Mr. Hamish MacCunn, he staggered us by saying, "I don't know about 'no speaking on the stage'; I am writing grand opera." And grand opera he did write—in the music-drama style. The general committee had budgeted for an expenditure of £1,000 on the pageant, but before the curtain went up on the opening night we had spent £5,000. We had no option. We were given a huge barn—the annexe of the Agricultural Hall, usually used for the pig-pens at the Royal show—and we had to convert it into a grand opera house with a stage large enough for 700 performers, with dressing-rooms for the same number, elaborate scenery for five episodes (representing the eternal snows of North Canada, a suttee scene in India, the meeting of Livingstone and Stanley at Ujiji, the defiance of Pélé by Queen Kapiolani in Hawaii, and a final gathering of all the nations of the earth around the Rock of Ages), and in addition we had to erect seats on a temporary sloping floor for 4,000 spectators, to say nothing of the creation of a thousand costumes, some of which necessitated careful research in the interests of strict accuracy. A great pit for the orchestra had to be excavated in the concrete floor, and about eleven hundred "properties" had to be provided. The original idea was to trust to volunteer amateur pageanteers. But that notion had to be abandoned, and a professional orchestra and a chorus with a nucleus of professional actors and singers had to be engaged.

All the time the general committee (which was confident that the exhibition itself would be a tremendous financial success) was in a ferment of alarm at the soaring expenditure on the pageant (which they were confident would run them into a dead loss). They were horribly apprehensive, too, that the stern old school of Nonconformists, who had

not shed their prejudices against the theatre, would revolt against the theatricality of the pageant. I confess I had my own doubts about this; but my responsibility was not for the initiation of the pageant but for its production. The doubts were dissipated on the opening night, for the pageant was not merely a lovely spectacle and a feast of splendid music but also a very ennobling presentation of the Conquests of the Cross! A negligible minority raised a protest. Dr. Campbell Morgan objected to the whole thing and refused to attend a representation. But Rev. Silvester Horne saw it, or parts of it, three or four times a week, Dr. Jowett saw it twice and expressed his warm appreciation. So did Rev. R. J. Campbell, Dr. Forsyth, and many other eminent ministers of many denominations.

London is a curious city, as our odd experience with this pageant revealed. Excellent press notices were published in the London daily papers, and money was spent freely on advertising. But for ten days or so the audiences at the pageant were alarmingly small. With seats for 4,000 people the pageant was played a dozen times to audiences of less than a thousand. We could scarcely induce people to accept free seats. "Paper" literally went begging. Then some crude youth (a member, we discovered, of a Y.M.C.A. at Highbury) wrote a letter to the *Daily News* indignantly protesting against the personation of David Livingstone on the stage. He declared that it was a desecration of the memory of a Christian hero. Through our energetic press agent we turned a battery of letters, in defence of the Livingstone scene, upon the *Daily News*. All the letters were signed by prominent Congregationalists. Mr. A. G. Gardiner, then editor of the *Daily News*, generously allocated space for the "silly season" controversy. We found it necessary, indeed, to get some letters written in a vein hostile to the Livingstone episode to keep the controversy going. Other newspapers commented on the correspondence, and in turn were bombarded



with letters engineered by our wide-awake press agent. The effect was magical. Immediately Londoners began to flock to the Agricultural Hall to see this very much discussed pageant. From that time onwards the pageant was played to "capacity houses," and the number of representations had to be increased from forty to sixty. In the last ten days of the exhibition the pageant was staged twice daily.

Another newspaper correspondence was threatened by someone writing to the *Star* complaining that the skirts of the Hawaiian surf maiden were too short. We had no use for that sort of criticism, and nipped that matter in the bud by inviting the *Star* man to come and measure the indicted skirts. None of them were more than seven inches off the ground—they were longer by far than women wear in the streets nowadays. The "Pageant of Darkness and Light," which it had been feared would impoverish "The Orient in London," was almost the only source of profit in the exhibition. Subsequently the scenery, costumes and acting rights were sold to an American Missionary Committee and the pageant went the round of the great cities of the United States attracting vast audiences. It was never reproduced again in England, though the music has frequently been rendered as an Oratorio.

Mr. Hamish MacCunn, whose music was really the secret of the pageant's success, died during the war, with a wealth of unwritten melody in his soul. I had met him in my first year in London when he did some musical criticism for the *Manchester Examiner*, upon whose London staff I was engaged. Then I never saw him again for eighteen years. He had not realized—he never did realize—the magnificent promise of his young days. In the early 'nineties it was anticipated that he would dazzle the musical world by the splendour of his compositions; but somehow he missed his tide. His gifts were prodigal, but instead of triumphs in composing grand operas he had to supplement his professional work as a teacher at the



Guildhall School of Music by conducting the orchestra at musical comedy theatres. His facility as a composer was astonishing. When the music of the Pageant of Darkness and Light was actually in the press and the final rehearsals were in progress, Mr. Hugh Moss found that there was no musical accompaniment for the suttee scene where an Indian widow walked seven times round the funeral pyre of her husband before flinging herself on the flames. Moss insisted that music was essential; MacCunn wanted to cut out the widow's perambulation of the pyre. But Hugh Moss was an autocrat, if a very genial one, and he got his way. MacCunn went home late from the rehearsal, but next morning brought with him a hauntingly lovely choral melody—quite the gem of the pageant music—which was sung to the words, "Blessed, O thrice blessed, is she who conquers death."

Some members of the Orient Exhibition committee were fearful lest the voluntary pageanteers drawn from the London Congregational churches might be corrupted by close association with the professional actors and actresses drawn from the London theatres. Most of the choristers engaged by Mr. Hamish MacCunn had been associated with him in Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and were men and women with whom it was really a pleasure to co-operate. But one member of the Orient Committee, in addressing the whole company at the final rehearsal, gave expression to his fears. It was done in a kindly spirit, but the phrasing was somewhat unfortunate, and he seemed to divide the pageanteers into two groups: (1) Christians taking part in the pageant as an act of service to foreign missions, and (2) those who were doing so in the ordinary course of their professional work. When the rehearsal was resumed it was quite evident something was going wrong. It certainly was. All the professionals were "on strike." Hamish MacCunn (who was a member of Dr. Monro Gibson's Presbyterian Church at St. John's Wood)

was offended too. The committee man who had all unconsciously disturbed the atmosphere by his *betise*, was aghast when I told him that his speech had given offence. Without a second's hesitation he stood up on a chair, and in the most unequivocal way apologized for the pain and misunderstanding he had unwittingly occasioned. If only a true gentleman can make an apology, he certainly demonstrated his essential gentlemanliness. The apology soothed all the wounded spirits. I think the episode, painful as it was for a moment, contributed to breaking down the Free Church hostility to the stage.

Our worst anxiety in connexion with the pageant came through a succession of thefts in the dressing-rooms of the amateur participants. Nothing was lost in the quarters of the professional singers and choristers; but night by night we had complaints that a purse, a handbag, some loose money or a watch had disappeared from the amateurs' dressing-rooms. I began to dread to see the Rev. Arthur Jarvis, who was registrar of the volunteer pageanteers, come into my office in the pageant hall. "Another confounded Christian has stolen a purse," he would say in a lugubrious tone. All our efforts to trace the thieves failed, till we placed a professional detective in each of the large dressing-rooms. Then a young man was promptly caught red-handed—with stolen goods in his possession. We found that he had no real connexion with any church nor with the L.M.S., but had somehow managed to get enrolled as a pageanteer, with the intention, no doubt, of rifling any pockets that he found convenient. It was thought wise not to prosecute him. So he was quietly put out of the building and told that if he was seen in Islington during the run of the pageant he would be arrested immediately. Whether the thief in the women's dressing-room was a confederate or not was never discovered; but the larcenies stopped there simultaneously—much to our relief, as the worry of it had been distressing.



## CHAPTER XIV

### DR. CLIFFORD

THE Bishop of London, meeting Dr. John Clifford one day, asked, "How is my old friend?" "Oh, splendid, thank you," the octogenarian replied; "but who are you calling old?" Nobody has ever convinced Dr. Clifford that he is even getting old. He simply refuses to age. Once when he called on me, and climbed two flights of stairs to reach my room, I gently scolded him for not having me called down, by telephone, to him. "Why, anyone might think I'm an old man!" he answered. At eighty-four he was knocked down by a taxicab in Trafalgar Square, but he went on to a meeting. Only in the most casual way he mentioned the accident to his daughter just before bedtime. Dr. Clifford's perennial youth is not physical only—he is young in mind and outlook. One day, teasingly, I told him he had disappointed me. He was quite concerned. Then I explained why. "Here," I said, "London University has set up a D.D. degree open to Free Churchmen, and you've let ten years go by without sitting for it." Dr. Clifford laughed at my mock reproachfulness. "I had thought of going in for it," he said, "and I should still love to do the reading for it; but I'm too busy to sit down and write a long thesis." He was over eighty at the time.

Lord Balfour once threw an ungracious jibe at Dr. Clifford. "I don't like his style," he said superciliously. One thought of Dr. Clifford's life story, of his childhood in a straightened if Godly home, of his beginning his life as a boy of nine by working twelve hours a day as a piecer



in a lace factory, and then of his B.A., M.A., LL.B., B.Sc. degrees, earned at London University when all his studying had to be done in the scanty leisure of a busy London pastorate. One thought of Dr. Clifford getting up at five o'clock in the morning to meet the boys from his church who gathered for a six o'clock Latin lesson from their minister; one thought of this man who has slaved from early morning till late at night for sixty years to promote every sort of human betterment; of his scanty income—for he never would take more than £600 a year, and when he was given a national testimonial insisted that the amount of income it brought him should reduce his retiring allowance from his church. One thought of his scholarship, his splendour of character, his genuine piety, his overflowing sympathy, his tenderness and his simple modesty. "Like his style," indeed!

I remember Dr. Clifford telling in public, on an occasion when he was the hero of a great day, how his thoughts flew back over a long vista of years to another great day in his life, when he ran home and, too breathless from running to speak a word, proudly threw 2s., his first week's wages, into the lap of his mother. During the twenty-five years I have known Dr. Clifford I have never seen him impatient, never heard him say an ignoble or mean word, and, though he has always been a fighter, I have never known him strike a blow below the belt. Upon his feet I have never yet detected a speck of clay. He is a hero who, if he had a valet, would be a hero even to him.

A little episode of twenty years ago in which Dr. Clifford figured large comes to mind. There had been a Free Church meeting at the Memorial Hall over the concentration camps in the last days of the Boer War. The meeting had been both protracted and distracted. When it was over a party of about ten of us, Dr. Clifford included, trooped up Ludgate Hill to get tea. We went into an A.B.C. shop, sat down, and were giving our orders when

Dr. Clifford asked the waitress what was closing time of the depôt. "Seven o'clock, sir," she replied. Dr. Clifford pulled out his watch. "It's seven minutes to seven now," he said. Then, addressing us all, he said: "This girl will be kept here after her time to go home, if we have tea now. I'm not going to keep her," and he picked up his hat and coat, beckoned us to follow, and led us out into the street. That action was perfectly typical of John Clifford. He had gone through life giving first consideration to other people. His Christianity always meant putting himself last.

But along with Dr. Clifford's considerateness has gone moral courage of a high order. His conscience has been his lode star. Nothing has ever made him deviate from the dictates of his sensitive conscience—neither abuse, opposition, unpopularity, flattery, persuasion or cajolery. In November, 1918, when Dr. Clifford was eighty-two, Sir Albert and Sir Evan Spicer gathered together a distinguished company of public men, Anglicans as well as Free Churchmen, at a luncheon in Dr. Clifford's honour. Mr. Lloyd George (who had just announced the general election) put aside a State engagement to be present, and in a speech, tender in its warm affection and unmeasured in its appreciation, paid his tribute to the old Baptist minister. "There is no man in England," said Mr. Lloyd George, throwing all his wonderful powers of emphasis into the words, "upon whose conscience I would sooner ring a coin than upon John Clifford's." An hour afterwards, as we were coming away from the luncheon, I walked from the British Empire Club with Dr. Clifford. I asked him if he was going to support Mr. Lloyd George at the general election. "No," said the sea-green incorruptible, "I cannot conscientiously do that. No, I cannot follow him. I've just written a manifesto urging Free Churchmen to vote for Independent Liberals or Labour candidates. I wish you would get it printed for

me." "You'd better let us publish it in the *Christian World*," I said, and Dr. Clifford agreed. It cost Dr. Clifford much soreness of heart to break away from Mr. Lloyd George—they had fought together as comrades for twenty-five years—and ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have been cozened back to the Prime Minister by the speech he had just made; but to Dr. Clifford the mere thought of compromise was alien. His conscience pointed his course and he took it.



## CHAPTER XV

MR. LLOYD GEORGE

NO one knowing Mr. Lloyd George twenty-five years ago would have dreamed that he was capable of enduring the physical and nervous strain of his long uninterrupted period of office. My first recollection of him is as a mere wisp of a man, a live wire certainly at that time, all nerves and vivacity, but with the physique of a 'Varsity boat coxswain. I saw him first soon after his entry into Parliament as a Welsh Radical who was expected to kick over all the traces and make the House of Commons sit up and take notice of Welsh Nationalism. His restless, bright eyes held me enchanted. So did his voice, vibrant and musical then as it is now. It is still the sweetest speaking voice among British politicians, and holds the secret of the wizardry that gets Mr. Lloyd George out of so many tight corners.

One of Mr. Lloyd George's boldest enterprises almost landed him on the rocks. He was the fount and origin—I might say almost the alpha and the omega—of the famous Welsh revolt against the administration of the Balfour Education Act. The Welsh county councils refused to work the Act by financing the Anglican and Roman Catholic voluntary schools. But in reality the revolt was a gigantic imposture. It existed only in public speeches and in the columns of certain newspapers, all of whom, I think I am right in saying, received their news from the same correspondent, who was Mr. Lloyd George's factotum. What happened was that the Welsh county councils did not make maintenance grants to the voluntary

schools, but they granted them loans to finance the schools. Anyway, the teachers were paid and the schools were sustained. In one county the revolt was genuine. Merionethshire had Mr. Haydn Jones (now M.P.) as Chairman of its Education Committee, and Mr. Haydn Jones had no patience with mere finesse. He was solidly supported by the council. In the autumn of 1905 Mr. Haydn Jones intimated that rather than finance the voluntary schools from the rates he would close all the elementary (provided) schools in Merionethshire, and get the ministers of the Free Churches to gather the children in the chapels for their lessons. Mr. Lloyd George was aghast, and a hurried little conference was held at Llandrindod Wells, in which Mr. Lloyd George, Rev. Thomas Law, Rev. C. Silvester Horne, Dr. J. D. Jones and Mr. Haydn Jones conferred on how this crisis—with its inevitable exposure of the much-advertised revolt—was to be met. I believe that Mr. Haydn Jones agreed to defer action until the New Year. Early in December Mr. Balfour's Government resigned, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman assumed office, Mr. Lloyd George received Cabinet office, and the Welsh revolt ceased to interest the political world.

Mr. Bullett, the American journalist, was not the first newspaper man that Mr. Lloyd George has thrown to the wolves after he had used him to fly a kite. The same experience befell me in 1905. During the last three years of the Balfour Government I often had to see Mr. Lloyd George at the House of Commons on educational matters for my paper. He held the strings of many subterranean movements in his hands, and, since he never answered letters or telegrams, it was necessary to see him occasionally to keep *au courant* with matters that were of Free Church interest. When I was trying to make a synthesis of Free Church opinion as to the lines on which an education settlement ought to be reached if a Liberal Government came into office, I had a long interview with Mr. Lloyd



George in one of the corridors at the House of Commons. I took careful notes as he spoke, and at least once suggested that he was skating over thin ice, and might upset Free Church stalwarts by what he was saying. He replied that Free Churchmen ought to understand the real position. The crucial point of the interview was that Free Churchmen might have to concede to the Anglicans the right of entry into the schools within school hours in order to give denominational religious instruction. Free Churchmen generally were, with some intransigent exceptions, ready to concede right of entry to the denominationalists outside school hours—i.e. before the registers were marked—but to “inside facilities” almost all Free Churchmen were hostile. Mr. Lloyd George felt then, however, that they might have to be conceded. I left him anticipating that the interview would flutter the Nonconformist dovecotes. However, I wrote the interview, and took care that a proof was sent to Mr. Lloyd George at his home at Wandsworth Common. It was not returned. The interview appeared on the Thursday prior to the National Free Church Council’s assembly in March, 1905. It made just the sensation I expected. To deal with the situation it created, the Free Church Council’s Education Committee was summoned to an emergency meeting before the Council opened on the Monday evening. Mr. Lloyd George, as a member of the Committee, received his summons, but, instead of attending, he telegraphed to the Secretary of the Free Church Council that I had misinterpreted him, adding (quite superfluously) that he was not in favour of inside facilities (though I had not suggested he was). Rev. Thomas Law allowed a colleague to wire me a copy of Mr. Lloyd George’s telegram, and I went post haste to the House of Commons to ask for an explanation of the repudiation. Mr. Lloyd George sent out a fellow Welsh member to ask what I wanted. I explained the circumstances, stated that if Mr.



Lloyd George persisted in his repudiation of my record of our interview I should publish an affidavit retailing all the circumstances, including my warning at the time of the interview that he was skating on thin ice, and the fact that by not returning the proof he had tacitly "passed" it. I added that if Mr. Lloyd George had been flying a kite that had come to earth and wanted to get out of the difficulty by a diplomatic evasion, I would give it to him. The M.P. went back to Mr. Lloyd George, and after a few minutes' absence returned to me to say that Mr. Lloyd George wanted the diplomatic evasion. I gave it to him in the next issue of the *Christian World*. But I never risked another interview with Mr. Lloyd George.

Shortly after Mr. Lloyd George succeeded Mr. Asquith in the Premiership he invited a large number of leading Free Church ministers to a breakfast party at 10 Downing Street. It was a diplomatic stroke. Nonconformists did not like Mr. Lloyd George's association with Lord Northcliffe, Lord Beaverbrook and Sir Edward Carson—the junta that threw Mr. Asquith to the wolves. Moreover, though the Free Churches had gone whole-heartedly into the war as an idealistic fight for small nationalities and to end war, there was a growing feeling after thirty months of war that a peace less perilous to the stability of the after-war world might be gained by conference than by a knock-out blow. All the early idealism had faded away, and the war was assuming all its ugly aspects of commercial cupidity. The gentlemen who "bled their country while their country bled for them" were not concealing their pride that they "were doing very well" out of the war. This mood made many Free Churchmen uneasy, especially as it was known that the Kaiser had twice made peace overtures which were scornfully rejected without being explored. The belief grew that the real bone of contention between Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George had been Mr. Asquith's readiness—as France itself was ready—to explore the

second German peace overture, while Mr. Lloyd George stood out for a "knock out."

So, soon after assuming the Premiership, Mr. Lloyd George sought to placate Free Church opinion. Dr. J. H. Shakespeare was the *deus ex machina*. The breakfast was a private function, and not altogether a happy one. Necessarily there has been some leakage concerning the proceedings. Piecing together the fragments, I gather that Mr. Lloyd George was pious and ingratiating. He solemnly assured the ministers that he stood where he had always stood—a Free Churchman, a Liberal, a lover of peace, and a believer in democracy. He hinted that one of his first duties on becoming Premier was to rush off to Paris to prevent France from making a separate peace. The Welsh wizard exercised all his wizardry. No trick in the magician's box was left unplayed. There was a little discussion, not altogether pleasing to Mr. Lloyd George. A few awkward questions were put. One Welsh minister, eminent in the Premier's own denomination, probed into Mr. Lloyd George's motives for declining to explore German peace overtures, and was assured that the war map was not in a ripe condition for such bargaining. One of the most highly revered of all Free Church leaders bluntly asked Mr. Lloyd George if he was not leaving God out of all his calculations, but the Premier easily satisfied that saintly scholar—in whom there is no guile. He wanted the Kaiser, he said, to have a monopoly of that brand of religiosity. As the company was breaking up a venerable minister, beloved in all the Free Churches, called a halt, and suggested that a few moments should be spent in prayer. Thereupon he prayed that Almighty God might keep Mr. Lloyd George faithful to all the principles and ideals to which he had that morning repledged himself. It was an affecting scene, and I would give much to have heard Mr. Lloyd George's subsequent report of it to, say, Sir William Sutherland.



## CHAPTER XVI

DR. JOWETT

**W**HEN he was a very small boy—I once heard Dr. Jowett say—he drew cows on a slate, and always took each drawing to his mother for her to praise it. One day he made a daring variation—he drew a house. Off he went with it to his mother for her approval. “There,” she said, “you have drawn a beautiful cow.” Dr. Jowett declares that his houses are all cows—in other words, if he makes a speech it is always a sermon masquerading as a speech. While it is true that Dr. Jowett has given all his energies and devoted his every gift of mind and soul to preaching, it is clear that he might have been exceedingly versatile. One of the best speeches made in the great education controversy in 1901-3 was delivered by Dr. Jowett at a Free Church Conference at the Holborn Restaurant. And I have heard him, on several occasions, make an after-dinner speech rippling with quiet humour and flashing with pretty wit. When he was minister at Carrs Lane Chapel all the Sunday school teachers in Birmingham crowded his weekly preparation class, when with blackboard and chalk Dr. Jowett made fine use of the pedagogic skill he acquired when he was an elementary school teacher in Yorkshire. I was present at Copenhagen in August, 1922, when Dr. Jowett, by a timely intervention in a heated debate, turned the tide of a discussion on armaments which threatened to lead an international conference of Christian leaders into a hopeless impasse.

At Edinburgh University Dr. Jowett fell under the spell of Professor Henry Drummond, and he caught some-



thing of that charm which Drummond diffused around him. Incidentally I may mention that Drummond had two peculiarities. He was an evangelist who wore corsets and, as he said himself, he could not spell. From Drummond Dr. Jowett learned, I fancy, his supreme tact in dealing with boys and young men. There is a story of Drummond being urged by a Scottish mother who was anxious about her undergraduate son's moral character to allow the young man to call and "be talked to." Drummond consented, and the lad came, looking sheepish and surly and evidently resenting the whole idea of the interview. Drummond met him with his engaging smile and with the disarming observation, "I suppose you know that this is all a put-up job." The ice broke, and a month later the undergraduate was acting as a steward at Drummond's theatre services.

A parallel story of Dr. Jowett is that when he was at Newcastle (where I first met him in 1893) Dr. Jowett started some religious meetings for boys and girls. At the first service four "bad lads" who had hidden away in a back gallery upset the proceedings by playing an obligato on penny whistles while Dr. Jowett was speaking. A steward captured them and brought them to the vestry for a scolding from Dr. Jowett. They stood in a row in obvious trepidation; but when Dr. Jowett came into the room he met them with the question, addressed in a contemptuous tone: "Can't you fellows play tin whistles any better than that? If you can't I shall have to get Mrs. Jowett to give you some lessons." The faces of the boys beamed back. A few weeks later—after they had had some lessons from Mrs. Jowett—the four boys trooped on to the platform at the children's service and played a quartette on tin whistles, with Mrs. Jowett accompanying them on the pianoforte.

Dr. Jowett has not merely concentrated all his powers upon preaching, but he has almost concentrated all his preaching upon one theme—"Grace." It is the core of

his gospel; and he comes back to that theme with inevitableness. And the subject of grace never stales in its infinite variety under Dr. Jowett's treatment. Within my recollection Dr. Jowett's preaching has changed in a marked way. There was a time, when he was at Birmingham, when his sermons were elaborately illustrated, reminding one of a gorgeous stained glass window. Now the illustrations come far less frequently and are much less ornate. The lily work at the top of the pillars is less obtrusive, and Dr. Jowett's preaching style is more robust and emphatic. His sojourn in America had a mellowing and deepening effect on his sermons. Happily he escaped "oratory," for which Americans have still an insatiable appetite.

I have never been able, from hearing Dr. Jowett preach, to feel quite certain where he stands in relation to modern theological issues. His ministry is essentially evangelical in spirit but not evangelical in the letter. I have never heard him preach on a miracle when he has emphasized the miraculous; invariably he has drawn from the miracle-story its spiritual significances and present-day applicability. Nor have I ever heard Dr. Jowett indicate his personal attitude towards higher criticism, beyond conceding once that there were two Isaiahs. His preaching is the preaching of affirmations to the total exclusion of negations. While he never wounds the susceptibilities of the Conservative school, he never challenges the Liberals in theology. "New" and "old" alike thus find common ground in a scriptural ministry luminous with spiritual truth, yet free from the jangling of the school men.

A large part of Dr. Jowett's fascination lies in his exquisite English. He promotes the use of words to a fine art—in the sense that Robert Louis Stevenson did, but not as Walter Pater did. He is never, I mean, meticulous to the point of being precious. A young Japanese student asked me once where he would hear the English language



spoken at its best. I advised him to hear Dr. Jowett preach and Mr. Asquith speak. A public school boy whom I knew went regularly to hear Dr. Jowett preach, because he said "it helps a chap in preparing for the literature papers in the matric. to see how Dr. Jowett uses English words." Words are Dr. Jowett's hobby-study. He delights in them. He told me once that Henry Ward Beecher used to carry a handful of precious stones—diamonds, rubies, amethysts—in his pocket so that at odd moments he could let the sunshine play upon them and watch the varying lights flash from their facets. "I do it too," added Dr. Jowett, "*only with words.*"

Popularity has left Dr. Jowett unspoilt. He bears himself with a natural austere dignity—an American minister once said that no one has ever dreamed of slapping Dr. Jowett on the back—but he readily unbends and enjoys a joke like the hearty Yorkshireman that he really is. All the flattery poured upon him runs off him like rain off a mackintosh. The American Press would have turned his head, had it been possible, by its chorus of adulation when he went to New York; but he brushed it aside in perfect disregard. To be hailed as "the greatest preacher in the world" offended his genuine modesty; while the "pen portraits," "impressions" and "appreciations" that filled the New York newspapers only made him feel humble. Once—and the occasion was one when any man might have been moved—I saw him almost overwhelmed by a demonstration of appreciation. It was at the historic dinner given in the House of Commons dining-room by Sir Albert Spicer and Sir Joseph Compton Rickett to welcome Dr. Jowett on his return to England at the close of his New York ministry. About a hundred members of Parliament, of all parties, joined in the tribute, and Mr. Lloyd George—who had pressed Dr. Jowett, by cablegram, to return to London, since England needed all her prophets in the time of social rebuilding after the war—told the



company that he had got into trouble with the American Government for helping to disturb Dr. Jowett in his New York ministry. "Really," said Mr. Lloyd George, "I thought that the Anglo-American alliance would be endangered, so hotly was my action over Dr. Jowett resented." After that dinner I walked to Victoria station from the House of Commons with Dr. Jowett, and I told him that he might well be forgiven for a little vanity over such a unique tribute. "It did get under my skin, I confess," he said. "You know me well enough to know that I do not seek personal glory, or court publicity. I have always lived my own life quietly and simply, just loving my home and my work; still, to-night's function has made me feel that work such as I have tried to do is not done in vain. I take it all as a tribute to the Christian ministry."

When I was in America in 1920 I heard that a megaphone man on one of the rubber-neck tourist cars in New York was drawing the attention of his sightseers to Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in the following terms: "On your left is Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, the wealthiest church in New York. For several years the pastor of this church was Dr. John Henry Jowett, the greatest preacher in the English-speaking world. He ministered here until 1918, when he was recalled to London by the King of England."

## CHAPTER XVII

### DR. ORCHARD AND OTHERS

**W**HENEVER I think of Dr. Orchard I recall an episode of ten years ago. The scene was a railway junction in the English Midlands. A branch line train had arrived at the junction landing a hilarious party of younger ministers and laymen fresh from a Free Church gathering at Swanwick. The London train entered the junction, and the Swanwick "Fellows" clambered into the compartments. As the train was about to move off half a dozen heads appeared at each of the windows of half a dozen different compartments, and from each group came a sharp staccato yell, every word emphasized till it sounded like a pistol-shot: "We—want—Orchard. We—want—Orchard." And then from another carriage (where Dr. Orchard was) came the defiant answer: "You—shan't—have—Orchard." The scene indexes the man and the appeal he makes to men. For Dr. Orchard is one of those vibrant souls whose personality exudes charm and fascination. Where he is, there there is laughter. He dispenses good humour wholesale. His own laugh is an infectious thing. Blindfold you could find your way to a group where Orchard is by the merriment emanating from it. He is at his best in a group.

Whatever may be the end of Dr. W. E. Orchard's spiritual pilgrimage—some people, mistakenly I believe, still imagine that he will ultimately find his way to Rome—his vital personality will never be subdued. Even in the girdled robe of a Friar in a Dominican monastery Dr. Orchard would be Dr. Orchard—a stormy petrel and the

centre of any revolt that might be afoot. For Dr. Orchard is a born rebel. It is in his blood. He takes a puck-like delight in shocking grandmothers and in frightening merely negatively good people. He emerged from the solid respectabilities of English Presbyterianism to flutter around the fringes of the New Theology controversy—though he was never really in Rev. R. J. Campbell's theological camp. I had a hand in his appointment to the pastorate of the King's Weigh House Chapel. Only recently I came across a letter amid a debris of correspondence, conveying to me a resolution passed by the Church Committee in September, 1914, after he had accepted its invitation to be its minister, thanking me for "the great assistance" I rendered in bringing about the "happy settlement." But the odd side of it all is that I suggested Dr. Orchard to the officers of the King's Weigh House Church on the double ground that he was a preacher of so distinctive a type that even West London could not ignore him, and that he was a Liberal theologian who would sustain what one may call the historical heretical tradition of the Weigh House Church. But Dr. Orchard does not stand still. There is nothing static in his make-up. His fluidity is part of his charm—he cannot wear stale.

Dr. Orchard went to the King's Weigh House belonging to the Liberal theological school, and within a year he was championing a wholly different cause. Theologically Dr. Orchard is now a confessed credalist. He boasts that he stands alone—that he is a modern Athanasius. He refuses to conform to current Nonconformity. His sacramentalism would cause him to be inhibited from any Anglican rectorate for ecclesiastical disorderliness. Nowhere in London is ecclesiastical millinery so obtrusive as at the King's Weigh House Church. Dr. Orchard—who sometimes calls himself "Father" Orchard—celebrates the Mass, reserves the sacraments, prays for the dead, burns candles



on the altar, and keeps up to date with the very latest priestly cringes. And along with all this goes the most robust and valiant preaching, the most scathing exhortation of modern sins, pretences, and follies, and the most unflinching sincerity and self-sacrifice. As Savonarola lashed the Florentines Dr. Orchard whips London pharisees to-day; and always he preaches to a crowded church. Half his congregation, it is said, go to the King's Weigh House for the ornate ritualistic service and can hardly endure Dr. Orchard's preaching; the other half go to hear Dr. Orchard's sermons, and can scarcely thole the ritualism. A Roman Catholic lady who stayed for a Communion service at the Weigh House remarked that "it was very impressive, but you know, my dear, I prefer our simple Roman Catholic Mass."

It is easier to disagree with Dr. Orchard's vagaries than to disagree with Dr. Orchard himself. He radiates a charm distinctly his own. His spirit is wholly delightful. So is his wit. He shares with Dean Inge the merit of being the most interesting preacher in London, and for the same reason. Both are uncensored, Dr. Orchard because he is not concerned if people who hear him preach are annoyed at his outspokenness, and Dean Inge because he is entrenched in a Deanery and can say just what he likes.

How Dr. Orchard escaped the attentions of the public prosecutor during the war passes comprehension. He said things no editor would dare to have printed, or, indeed, could have published without coming under the ban of the Censor. Dr. Orchard's pacifism went unchallenged and unrebuked. He denounced all war in general, and the great war in particular. A stepson of Dr. Orchard's was an officer in the Army, and he found his stepfather's pacifist opinions very distasteful. But one night this officer dined with a highly placed military personage

engaged in the War Office. Over the dinner-table conversation turned on the war, and the military official confessed that he hated war though it was his trade. Moreover, he confessed his doubts whether war ever settled anything. "Sometimes," he said, "I get so fed up with war and War Office work and the futility of all this slaughter that I can't bear it any longer, and I go off, in sheer desperation, to a place called the King's Weigh House Chapel, near Grosvenor Square, where a preacher named Orchard raves against war like a howling dervish. It restores my soul." He had not the slightest notion that his guest was in any way related to Dr. Orchard.

My acquaintance with Rev. Bernard J. Snell dates from a meeting in the grounds of the fever hospital at Stockwell in, I think, 1899. He was just convalescent from typhoid fever, and when I had called to inquire about his progress I met him strolling round the gardens. The next time I saw him was in his pulpit a few months later, when he was resuming his ministry after his long illness. In the interval he had lost his wife and one of his closest friends. As a rule, I do not remember texts; but I remember that on that occasion Mr. Snell preached on "The day will come when my tongue shall yet praise Him." It was evident that he was feeling bruised and dazed by life's batterings, and he was altogether too honest to say at that moment that he could feel that "all things work together for good."

Good stories cluster round Bernard Snell—himself an excellent raconteur. Once he went back to New College, Hampstead (his *Alma Mater*), to address the students. He was unconventional, as is his way, and audacious too. He told the students leaving college that whatever else they did they must each save £5 in their first year in the ministry, £10 in their second year, until (even if they went unmarried) they had a nest-egg of £50. That meant in-



dependence, and without a sense of independence a preacher could not be true to himself. "You can't," said Mr. Snell, "preach what you feel unless you are in a position to say: 'You be damned' to an objecting deacon." The Principal of New College was horror-struck, and Mr. Snell has not since been invited to address New College students.

Mr. Bernard Snell's brother, Rev. Herbert Snell, is also a Congregational minister. If the fates decreed that they had to address the same meeting, the one who spoke first was at one time quite likely to tell this story. I heard it when Herbert Snell played it off on his brother Bernard. Mr. Herbert Snell was travelling alone in a railway carriage when a drunken man got in and sat down at the other end of the compartment. Then it occurred to the minister that he ought not to treat the poor inebriate with contempt, so he spoke to him. The drunken man, in reply, asked him if he was a minister.

"Yes, a Congregational minister," Mr. Snell answered.

"Do you know a Congregational minister named Snell—Bernard Snell?" asked the drunken man.

"I ought to do; I'm his brother!" replied Mr. Herbert Snell.

"You Bernard Snell's brother," said the inebriate, rising unsteadily and offering his hand. "Then I'm glad to meet you. I want to shake hands with Bernard Snell's brother. I think the world of Bernard Snell. Why, do you know," he added in a confidential, beery whisper, "Bernard Snell converted me."

Thirty years ago New College, Hampstead, had a venerable secretary, Rev. William Farrer, who had a weakness for phrasing the most matter-of-fact resolutions in the grand Victorian style. If it were just a vote of thanks, Mr. Farrer made it bristle with polysyllabic words. A resolution adopting a report glittered with rhetorical



adornments. Mr. Farrer was deaf, and used a very large ear-trumpet. He stood close to the platform, immediately in front of the speaker, and, with his ear-trumpet in action, listened to his resolutions being read with all the pride of a young author. Once it fell to the lot of a minister whose wit exceeded his charity to propose one of Mr. Farrer's verbose resolutions. He read it with exaggerated emphasis, stressing all the rhetorical phrases and accentuating all the resounding words. The audience first smiled, then quietly chuckled, and at last laughed outright.

"But, excuse me, ladies and gentlemen," said the ministerial satirist, "I am reading this resolution exactly in the form it has been handed to me—except for the mistakes in spelling."

Mr. Farrer, who was standing as usual with his trumpet to his ear, gasped, paled, and dropped into a chair as if he had been shot. His glorious hour had turned to tragedy. I think he either died or resigned his secretaryship of New College soon afterwards. Anyway, I never saw the queer old gentleman with his big ear-trumpet again.

Canon Christopher of Oxford was a very notable figure at May meetings when they flourished in the old Exeter Hall days. He too always stood in the front row with a big trumpet fixed to his ear. However dull the speeches might be—and they often were terribly dull—he strained to hear every word. I never saw him without recalling Palmerston's remark about the Member of Parliament who used to sit through debates in the House of Commons listening eagerly through his trumpet.

"Did you ever," said Palmerston one day, "see a man throw away his natural advantages so prodigally?"

Lord Leverhulme makes no secret of it that his deafness is not devoid of advantages—he cannot hear criticisms

of himself. When I was a small boy I often stood at the door of a little factory on the banks of the Mersey watching soap being boiled. A short, thick-set man in his shirt-sleeves directed the operations. It was William Lever, now Lord Leverhulme, the directing spirit of world-wide business operations with a capital of about forty millions. Mr. Lever, so the story went in Warrington, began his Sunlight Soap business with a capital of £500 lent to him by his wife. Thence he moved to Port Sunlight, where he created a town, planned on garden city lines, for his operatives. There is a Congregational Church at Port Sunlight, and Lord Leverhulme takes a delight in getting leading preachers to occupy its pulpit. Once when he was entertaining a very famous preacher, Sir William (as he was then) eagerly accepted an invitation to read the Scripture lesson at the next morning's service. But before going to bed he asked the preacher to tell him what the lesson would be, and he added: "I hope you won't select a passage with things like, '*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,*' in it."

On my first visit to Switzerland in, I think it was, 1895, I travelled with a Lunn party, and made Grindelwald a centre for excursions. One day, after crossing the lower *mer de glace*, three of us went into an ice tunnel cut into the terminal of the glacier. At the far end we found a minister—we guessed he was a Wesleyan Methodist—who was evidently deeply impressed by the cave. As we were turning to leave he startled us by saying, "Don't you think we ought to sing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow'?" and he promptly started to sing. We might have been disposed to sing the Doxology on the *mer de glace*, whose natural grandeur did set up a sense of reverential awe, but the man-made ice tunnel did not stir our devotional feelings. So we let the minister sing it as a solo. Afterwards we discovered his identity. It



was the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, now minister of the new Central Wesleyan Methodist Hall at Westminster, and one of the most popular preachers in London, judging by the unfailing crowds that he attracts. It has been one of "fate's discourtesies" that I have never met Mr. Dinsdale Young since that rather ludicrous encounter at Grindelwald, but I have heard him speak on many occasions. He grows more and more like Dr. Parker in appearance, and speaks in tones and phrases that recall the famous minister of the City Temple. Mr. Dinsdale T. Young prides himself that he is just an old-fashioned Methodist preacher, whose function, under Heaven, it is to stand four-square against deviations from the orthodox faith once for all delivered unto the saints. I know, however, that his ministry sends a stream of hope and cheer through many world-worn men and women.

A ministerial friend of mine, now dead (I will call him the Rev. John George), used to tell with gusto an unkind story against himself. He was a perfectly delightful man, but no one in his wildest moments would have said that he was exactly a type of British beauty. The fact that he was no Adonis had been rubbed into him at boarding school and again at college. When he had been a year or two in the ministry he found himself in Liverpool, and went out to find an old theological college chum who had recently settled in a Liverpool suburb, and had just married. This friend had often talked to his young wife about the Rev. John George, describing him as "at once the dearest and the ugliest man in the world." The manse door was opened by the young wife, and the visitor asked if he could see his friend.

"I'm sorry, Mr. George, but my husband is down with influenza and must not see anyone. He will be sorry when he hears you have called and could not see him."

"Oh, I'm exceedingly sorry," said Mr. George, and



then he added : " But, excuse me, Mrs. —, how did *you* know that I am Mr. George? "

The young wife fled.

If volubility is oratory and verbosity is preaching, I imagine that Dr. De Witt Talmage must rank as a great oratorical preacher. I only heard him once, which makes me feel I have much to be thankful for. It was just after a silly woman had thrown a ginger-nut at Mr. Gladstone and cut the Grand Old Man's eye. Talmage was furious at the outrage, and in his sermon declared that before the sun went down that day America's thundering denunciation of the vile deed would reverberate across the Atlantic. I watched the cables for the thunder, but the reverberations did not come. A fortnight later the *New York Herald* came to hand with a single-line note on the incident—"as usual, Gladstone takes the cake."

trace

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A POLYGLOT AND SOME EDITORS

**A**LIVERPOOL lady who sat next to Dr. John Watson at dinner one night apologized for her husband's absence on the ground that he was suffering from a "polyglot in his nose." Dr. Watson smilingly observed that he had often wished that he had a polyglot in his throat.

"Oh, if you knew," replied the lady, "how painful a polyglot in the nose is, you would not want to have a polyglot in your throat, I'm sure."

I do not know how many languages a man needs to speak to earn the title to be a polyglot, but I imagine that Dr. A. E. Garvie, Principal of New College, is one. Mr. John Morley met Dr. Garvie in Montrose years ago, and records in his "Memories" the astonishment he experienced at finding in that remote corner a young Congregational minister familiar with half a dozen European languages and their literatures. Since then Dr. Garvie has expanded his linguistic achievements. Rumour credits him with acquiring a new language during each summer vacation. I met him in New York picking up American very rapidly in 1920. Dr. Garvie is a Scot, and his speech betrayeth him; but he is believed to believe that his accent is unnoticeable. He is like the Fife man who, told in London that "they could not understand his accent," protested that "he'd never heerd tell before that Fife folk *had* ony awccent."

Dr. Garvie is also my outstanding example of a really prodigious worker. His only recreation is other work;

but his reputation as a raconteur stands high. Better than any story he tells is one told of him. On a journey to Newcastle Dr. Garvie looked out of the railway carriage window and got a scrap of cinder, blown from the engine, in his eye. At York, with his eye twitching with pain, he ran to the refreshment buffet and ordered a glass of milk. When he had gulped it down he thought the flavour unfamiliar and asked the waitress in a dubious tone, "Was that milk?" "No, sir, rum and milk." "Oh, but I asked for milk!" "Yes, I know," replied the waitress, "but you tipped me the wink so I made it rum and milk."

It is an interesting coincidence that the present editors of the *Times* and of *Punch* are both men of Free Church ancestry. Mr. Wickham Steed's father was a county lawyer in Suffolk and a pillar of East Anglian congregationalism. Mr. Steed knows Europe and European politics as few men do. He lived in the very midst of high politics when he represented the *Times* in Vienna, and he had at his elbow Madame Roze who knew everybody that Mr. Steed did not know. Between them they could get at everybody who mattered. Mr. Steed is an extraordinarily voluble and an amazingly interesting talker. I once lunched with him before he went to Printing House Square. We were a party of five, apart from Mr. Steed. Scarcely anyone spoke. Conversation with Mr. Steed is a monologue by Mr. Steed; but as Barrie said of Blackie, he does not mind that. Nor did we!

Sir Owen Seaman, the editor of *Punch*, was not only the son of a Nonconformist deacon but he went to Mill Hill a Nonconformist school. Since then his interest in Nonconformity has waned into non-existence, I should conjecture. This, I am afraid, is not unusual with old Millhillians. Sir Owen Seaman's father was a deacon, and I think secretary, for a time, of Westminster Congrega-



tional Chapel. Rev. Samuel Martin, the preacher under whom Sir Owen Seaman sat as a small boy, was succeeded by Rev. Henry Simon, uncle of Sir John Simon, K.C. When Sir Owen Seaman was at Mill Hill school the late Sir James Murray was just beginning work on his great dictionary, now nearing completion. Dr. Murray, as he was then, had a little tin shed at the school as his lexicographical study, and it was known to all Millhillians as the Scriptorium. Mr. Robert Harley, who shared with Dr. Todhunter the honour of being the greatest mathematicians produced by the Free Churches, was a master at Mill Hill about the same time. In recognition of his services to mathematical science Mr. Harley was elected a member of the Athenæum Club. I remember hearing him tell over a dinner-table a story of the frigid atmosphere at the club. A new member had the audacity one day to make a remark to an old member to whom he had not been introduced. He said "it was a fine day," or something equally innocuous. The old member gasped at such an impertinence; but he preserved his presence of mind and managed to reach a bell. A club servant appeared. "This gentleman," said the old member—pointing to the new member—"wants to say something to somebody. Will you please attend to him?"

Bishop Welldon remarked once that the big money prizes associated with modern boxing matches degraded the sport, though he confessed to having a sneaking sort of regard for old Tom Sayers. This reminded me of a story of Dr. Alfred Rowland, who was Congregational minister at Crouch End for forty years. Dr. Rowland, who has always struck me as a fine example of a sane saint, used to take his boys for a walk round Hampstead Heath, returning to Crouch End by way of Highgate cemetery, to show them where Tom Sayers and James Lillywhite are buried. Henry Ward Beecher was a

devoted reader of descriptions of prize fights. He carried them in his pockets and read them at odd moments.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle took up a lance on behalf of the Congo natives who were being ground under the heel of King Leopold of Belgium, and just before his vigorous booklet appeared I spent a day with him at Crowborough to gather material for an interview on the Congo atrocities and the part played by the missionaries in the *exposé*. The creator of Sherlock Holmes had, like Robert Louis Stevenson, rather despised missionaries until he came up against concrete instances of their value as sentinels of humanitarianism. Then he changed his view entirely, and told me that he would never again speak anything but good of foreign missionaries. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had, in his dining-room at Crowborough, a large cage of Javanese birds, one of which started singing as he and I talked about the Congo revelations. Sir Arthur jumped up and called me to the cage. "I want to experiment with you. I do this with all my visitors. You see that bird which is singing—watch it and listen to it. When you cannot hear its voice any longer put your finger down on the table, but notice that the bird's throat goes on throbbing." I listened, and the bird's song rose higher and higher in the scale till the moment came when my ear could catch no sound coming from its throat. But the bird was still singing, and it was a full twenty seconds later before Sir Arthur laid his finger on the table to indicate that he too could no longer hear its voice. And yet the bird sang on. I was mystified; but Sir Arthur, who had been studying the matter, drew the conclusion that all nature must be full of tremendous noises, above and below the range of gamut of the human ear. This Javanese bird had carried its song to a higher key than our ears could follow; but Sir Arthur's ear had been educated by the bird to a far higher sensitiveness than mine.



Soon after the death of Booker Washington I heard the late Dr. Walter Hines Page, then American Ambassador in London, deliver an address on the negro leader which stands out in my memory as one of the finest utterances I have ever listened to. Dr. Page was a journalist by profession, and if he was not an orator in the commonly accepted interpretation of that word, he had an almost uncanny genius for diagnosing another man's soul. In speaking of Booker Washington he threw aside ambassadorial reserve and submerged his American colour prejudice. I certainly never heard a white man assess a black man's worth with such a total freedom from condescension and with such whole-hearted enthusiasm. Dr. Page edited the *World's Work* for some years, and he was a great encourager of literary aspirants. Of course, he had to reject many contributions, but (like the present editor of *Punch*) he never sent back a manuscript in which he discerned any signs of potential literary capacity without a kindly and stimulating note. Once he returned a worthless story submitted by a lady, and received a sharp complaint from the aspiring authoress. She wrote :

SIR,—You sent back last week a story of mine. I know you did not read the story, for as a test I pasted together pages 18, 19 and 20, and the manuscript came back with these pages still pasted. So I know that you are a fraud and turn down stories without reading them.

Though the politest of men, Dr. Page rejoined with a crushing answer. He wrote :

MADAM,—At breakfast, when I open an egg, I don't have to eat the whole egg to discover it bad.



## CHAPTER XIX

DR. R. J. CAMPBELL

THE tempestuous New Theology controversy that rose and swirled around the magic personality of the Rev. R. J. Campbell in 1907 was said at the time to have made the man in the street interested for the first time in theology. One would never have expected that so winsome a personality as R. J. Campbell would have been the centre of such a cyclone. A year or two before the controversy broke out Mr. Campbell had been a Free Church idol. He was the dominant figure of English Christianity. Everything conspired to make him an object of admiration—his magnetic eyes, his soft white hair, his silvery voice, his persuasive eloquence, his palpable sincerity, his spiritual genius, his ingrained goodness and his indomitable courage. Women worshipped him, men fought their way into the City Temple to hear him. His fame spread all over the world. If this idolatry unbalanced him, it would have unbalanced any man, for dazzling prosperity spoils more men than adversity breaks. Mr. Campbell's natural sensitiveness became almost morbid. The slightest criticism cut him to the quick. He was almost too thin-skinned for public life.

A *World* character sketch writer once said of Mr. Campbell that the Reginald in him was always in raging conflict with the John, and that the spirit of "the House" (Christ Church, Oxford) was eternally battling with his Methodist upbringing. The writer was truer in his diagnosis than possibly he imagined. Mr. Campbell's genuine human sympathies drove him into the Labour Party; but

the working man's bad language and habits offended his fastidious instincts. So his Socialism oozed away. Possibly, too, Mr. Campbell ostentatiously trailed his coat and went hunting for trouble. Though he was a passive resister he publicly dissociated himself from Dr. Clifford for a criticism of the bishops who had demanded the Act which provoked the resistance. He visited Mr. Chamberlain, whom Free Churchmen distrusted and disliked, and he let it be known that he did not believe that Free Trade necessarily opened the gates to the Kingdom of Heaven. He had an audience of the Pope, though he boasted his Ulster ancestry and looked askance at Irish Home Rule. This habit of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds weakened Mr. Campbell's hold on Nonconformity, and paved the way for his swift descent from favour when the New Theology furore began.

Somehow Nonconformity accepted Mr. Campbell as an Evangelical from the beginning of his ministry; but an Evangelical, in the ordinary interpretation of the word, he never really was. At the request of Sir William Robertson Nicoll a colleague and I searched through Mr. Campbell's published sermons at the time of the controversy to see if we could find a single authentic utterance that brought him definitely within the radius of evangelical orthodoxy. But the search was made in vain. For two years before the furore Mr. Campbell had been preaching a theology with an underlying monistic philosophy. "Jesus was divine; but so are you," he told his congregation at the City Temple long before sermon tasters scented heresy in his teaching. He was cutting sharply across Pauline theology long before he defiantly declared that "Paul's opinion is just Paul's opinion, and not binding on you and me."

The storm burst in a teacup—in a private gathering of the London Board of Congregational Ministers. Mr. Campbell read a paper before this body outlining his



advanced theological views. The exposition was something of a bombshell, and a sharp bitter discussion followed, in the course of which one impolite minister dubbed Mr. Campbell and his theology as "the spawn of hell." Within an hour or two of the board meeting I met a group of ministers who had been present, and who with great eagerness described the scene and outlined Mr. Campbell's paper. The next day the whole proceedings were common knowledge in Congregational circles. There was every probability that the episode would be reported in the daily press. On behalf of the *Christian World* I wrote Mr. Campbell, acquainting him with this leakage from the supposedly secret gathering. I told him I had material enough to write a brief report for the *Christian World*, but that a précis prepared by himself would represent him more faithfully. At the same time I told him that if he felt bound to silence I would accept his decision and publish nothing. Mr. Campbell did not feel so bound. He sent me a précis of his theological paper, and it was published in the *Christian World* just as he supplied it. In Free Church circles its publication caused some amazement, but even then there might have been no fierce controversy. What set the heather ablaze was the interview which Mr. Campbell gave to Mr. F. A. Mackenzie of the *Daily Mail*, in which in plain language, free from all theological technicalities, he threw over the Doctrine of the Fall, the Pauline Plan of Salvation, and a round half-dozen doctrines that had been the very citadels of the Evangelical faith. Then the storm-clouds burst.

The New Theology controversy was a Donnybrook Fair, with hard words and savage recriminations for black-thorns and broken heads. Mr. Campbell stood alone save for a handful of ministers. Some of them ratted with all expedition as soon as the deluge came upon them. Mr. Campbell fought with his back to the wall, retorted bitterly upon his assailants, rushed off to Cornwall to write, in a



month, an *apologia pro vita sua* which he lived to recant. He challenged his foes to do their worst. Pulpits and platforms rang with denunciations of Mr. Campbell's theological wild oats. Dr. Fairbairn called his book a "farrago of nonsense." Dr. Forsyth, who had had his differences with Mr. Campbell earlier, said Mr. Campbell's views were like a bad photograph—"under-developed and over-exposed." Phrases from the book snatched from their context were pilloried as impious. The ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union, with the Principals of the Congregational Colleges, met over a dinner at Lancaster Gate and drew up a declaration of the faith as once delivered to the saints to counter Mr. Campbell's heresy, and it was published with a blare of trumpets, only to sink almost immediately into oblivion. Isolated, boycotted and ostracized, Mr. Campbell sulked in his tent at Enfield. He started a league of fellow-thinkers to sustain him in the fierce fray, but the strong men who first rallied to his standard—like Rev. T. Rhondda Williams and Rev. Arthur Pringle—soon discovered that Mr. Campbell wanted followers content to be echoes of himself, not colleagues and fellow explorers in theological thought. He brooked no difference from his own views, and he resented all criticisms as hostile assaults. Less prominent ministers who, risking all, joined his bodyguard, found themselves stranded high and dry when Mr. Campbell suddenly came to terms with his adversaries. Before the Congregational Union Dr. Forsyth and Mr. Campbell fell upon each other's necks in histrionic fashion (they had met previously and rehearsed the affecting reconciliation over a dinner table a week previously), and Mr. Campbell crept back into the camp from which he had been driven. The futility of it all was pathetic; the pain it all occasioned tragic. The set-back it gave to theological freedom was deplorable. Orthodoxy reigned again until the war came, shaking all the theologies and discovering in the pews of all the churches men and women

baffled and bewildered and fearful lest the very fundamentals of faith would be destroyed in the awful debacle.

Mr. Campbell next disturbed the placid waters by renouncing Nonconformity and seeking ordination in the Church of England. Literally he was driven from the City Temple by his unimaginative church officers. Under the protracted strain of three great services a week, with every sermon he preached being reported and published verbatim, Mr. Campbell, never a robust man, felt his strength ebbing. Some relief was an absolute necessity. He asked to be given a colleague at the City Temple, and he sounded Dr. Hugh Black of New York (formerly of Free St. George's Church, Edinburgh) with a view to their becoming equal partners in the pastorate. But the deacons created difficulties. Their idea was that the City Temple pulpit must have an outstanding preacher who could be heard only at the City Temple. Dr. Black would not have conformed to that condition. Anyway, without exploring the possibilities the proposal was vetoed, and Mr. Campbell, overborne by the burden, struggled on for a while. An overture from the Bishop of London and a conversation with Bishop Gore, with whom Mr. Campbell had been in association in his Oxford days, coupled with Mr. Campbell's undergraduate affiliation with the Anglican Church, opened the way of release—into the fold of Episcopacy. All through his Free Church ministry Mr. Campbell had been in Nonconformity rather than of it, and the wrench, I imagine, occasioned him no such agony of soul as John Henry Newman endured. But Mr. Campbell's reversion caused many sad hearts in the Free Churches. He had innumerable friends who loved him still and watched his departure from their midst with sorrowing spirits. They have followed his later course with wistful interest. It seems the inevitable fate of Free Church ministers, however distinguished, who go over to the Established Church to suffer eclipse, and the Church



of England has succeeded in making a mute, inglorious Milton of even R. J. Campbell.

King Edward was interested in Rev. R. J. Campbell, and wanted to hear him preach. The King could not go to a Dissenting Chapel or the heavens would have fallen. But Edward VII was not the man to be thwarted by any little obstacle, and a plan was formulated for Mr. Campbell to preach at Windsor Castle Chapel one Sunday. All the arrangements were kept secret, and I remember how startled Mr. Campbell was one day when incidentally I mentioned that I had heard of the plan. Possibly he was even more astonished that a journalist could keep a secret of that kind out of his newspaper. The arrangements were all complete, but Mr. Campbell, just before the date fixed, upset the whole scheme by publicly protesting at the City Temple against the Tzar Nicolas of Russia being given a national welcome in England just after the peasants' massacre at Moscow. That was an unforgivable offence against royalty, and King Edward in consequence never heard Mr. Campbell preach.

Frail though he was, Mr. Campbell persisted for years in a system of sermon preparation which must have placed a terribly exhausting strain on his nervous forces. He did not write his sermons, nor even skeletonize the line of argument. Literally he went into the pulpit without a line or a note. Often, two hours before preaching, he would not even have selected a subject. His whole plan of study work was, however, designed to make this method, apparently so haphazard and precarious, serve him effectively. A voracious reader of history, philosophy, theology, *belle lettres*, poetry and drama, and possessed of a memory so extraordinarily tenacious that after two readings of a poem or a prose passage he could repeat it, Mr. Campbell had always half a dozen "growing" sermon themes running in his mind. At the very last moment, say an hour, before entering the pulpit, he would go to his



study, lie on a sofa, concentrate his mind intensely upon the subject he had selected, and preach the sermon to himself. When the time came to face his congregation (with the inevitable verbatim reporter in the side gallery) Mr. Campbell was perfectly prepared. Possibly it was this exacting method of preparation that gave such spontaneity to his earlier preaching and lent appositeness to the poetical and prose quotations that fitted so perfectly into the mosaic of his thought.

Once, when he was preaching at my request, Mr. Campbell asked me quite casually while travelling to my home: "What do you want me to preach about?" I was nonplussed for the moment, but mentioned a sermon I had heard from him about a month before, and suggested that that discourse would inspirit our people. "Yes, I'll give that," he replied. After a meal he asked for an hour's quiet in the drawing-room. Then we walked down to the church. The sermon he preached was not quite the sermon I had recalled. He epitomized that former sermon in a ten minutes' introduction—a gem in the way of finished *précis* work—and then carried the thought to a further and deeper stage. It was his second sermon that day (he had preached at midday in the City Temple), and as we drove to King's Cross after the second service I saw very clearly what ravages his method of preaching was making upon his vital resources. I ought to mention that he would not hear of any "fee" for his sermon. Mr. Campbell was always free from any money-loving reproach—I might say he was quixotically free from that taint. Later, under express commands from his doctors, Mr. Campbell began to write his sermons and take his MSS. into the pulpit. Now he reads from a full manuscript, but much of the glory of the old extempore method has departed.

Soon after Mr. Campbell became minister at the City Temple the interior of the building, which Dr. Parker had

allowed to get very filthy, was redecorated. The work was done while Mr. Campbell was away on a summer tour in the United States, and one of the deacons, a pawnbroker, I believe, took charge of the renovations. The painting scheme thus carried out was barbaric in splendour, and gilt entered lavishly into the decoration. As Kipling might say: "It was magnificent, but was it art?" When he got back, Mr. Campbell, though I think he concealed his feelings, was rather horror-struck. He showed my colleague, Mr. Harry Jeffs, over the gaudily painted interior, and was not greatly shocked when, on asking the journalist's opinion of the decorations, he received the answer: "It seems to me, it wants a promenade."

From the early days of his Brighton ministry until he entered the Church of England I was on terms of some intimacy with Mr. Campbell, and, though I have not seen him in recent years, I received from him, at a moment when the sky seemed for ever darkened to me, a letter of the most gracious sympathy and comfort. And that leads me to say that the outstanding quality in Mr. Campbell's character—it was the quality that made his preaching at the City Temple appeal to sorely troubled and world-battered men and women—is his quick sensitiveness to other people's pains and anxieties. There are ministers to whom one tells of a sad case, of some shipwrecked life, say, knowing beforehand that they will listen with just the philosophic calm that people preserve when they hear of misfortunes not their own. But Mr. Campbell met a sad story with eager wistfulness in his eyes, and upon his lips was the prompt query: "Do you think I could do anything? If I can, I will." And he would. His Christianity meant personal service, at whatever cost. He was often sadly exploited by rascals who played on his sensitive sympathies, but, ignoring these disillusionments, he went on spending, and being spent, on efforts to uplift the poor human derelicts—simply, I believe, because



he feared he might turn empty away a really deserving appellant for his help. Weaknesses one saw in Mr. Campbell—in whom does not one see them?—but my abiding memory of him is of a man who is a Christian to the point of being a fool about it. Reginald John Campbell, John Clifford, Charles Gore and Robert Forman Horton are sufficient repudiations for me of Mr. Bernard Shaw's dictum that "there has been only one Christian, and they hanged him."

Mr. George Bernard Shaw made an appearance in the pulpit of the City Temple during Rev. R. J. Campbell's era, and Mr. Campbell expressed his pride that Mr. Shaw's first visit to the City Temple was paid at his request. The Free Church audience that listened to Mr. Shaw's lecture was in a state of blank puzzlement over his audacities and irreverences. Mr. Shaw said he thought he had spoken in the City Temple before, but possibly he did not speak from the pulpit then. He did not remember, but he might have "stood on the communion table." There were some shocked "sh's—sh's" at this characteristic audacity, but Mr. Shaw went one better. He objected to God being thought of as old. "I like to think of my God," he said, "as a young man with his career still before him. I hate to think of God as an old man who strikes bargains with his creatures about the salvation of their souls, or a God who has to be bribed and begged from." There were moments when I thought Mr. Campbell was ill at ease that night.



## CHAPTER XX

### DR. FORSYTH

**I**N journalistic life one necessarily meets many good talkers; but I think the best conversationalist I have known was Dr. P. T. Forsyth, the learned Principal of Hackney Congregational College. His brilliance as a talker was dazzling—so dazzling that he made one disposed to listen without saying anything. But that would not do for Dr. Forsyth. He did not want to monopolize all the talk. His conversation really was conversation—an exchange of thoughts and ideas and humours. W. T. Stead was a prodigious talker; but not in the sense that Dr. Forsyth was, because Stead liked to do all the talking. When Dr. Forsyth talked he was lucid, and he certainly was not always even intelligible when he wrote. Who was it that said that, compared with Dr. Forsyth's prose, Browning's *Sordello* was lucid? When he was in the right mood—that was not always: for sometimes he was perversely angular—Dr. Forsyth's wit flashed out quite effortlessly, and he could keep a group of men bubbling with his gay spontaneous humour.

Sometimes Dr. Forsyth's verbal thrusts were not chivalrous, and he could be horribly bearish. It was not merely that he did not suffer fools gladly—he could not suffer them anyhow, and to obtuse people he was sometimes very brusque. Many a church at which he was preaching found it difficult to find a host ready to entertain Dr. Forsyth, who was not the kind of guest whose presence went unfelt in an ordinary middle-class home. On second visits to a church he generally found himself

with another host. All allowance has to be made for the ill-health from which Dr. Forsyth suffered all through his later life. Peculiarly sensitive to chills, he was in terror of draughts, and digestive trouble made him "pernickety" about what he ate and drank. He believed that he had heart trouble, but in his last illness it was the soundness of his heart alone that kept him alive for months.

Dr. Forsyth was almost the most conscientious reviewer I have ever known. It was as the reviewer of the most important theological books for the *Independent and Non-conformist* that I first made his acquaintance. He was at Leicester then, and was still tarred with the heretical brush. All the really big German theological and Biblical criticism books were at once dispatched to him. He received them quite politely; but to get the reviews out of him was quite another story. The reason for his tardiness was really his ultra-conscientiousness. Before he passed judgment on a book he wanted not merely to read it but to use it as a tool in sermon-making. He felt the responsibility of recommending other preachers to spend their money on a book until he had made sure that it was going to give them full value for their outlay. Perhaps it is well for authors generally that all reviewers do not take their responsibility with such portentous seriousness; but it would be better perhaps for theological science if such caution were more generally exercised.

Even when a review of a book had been dragged out of Dr. Forsyth by frequent and vehement reminders my troubles as an editor did not end. He always insisted on revising a proof; and when a revised proof came back from Dr. Forsyth I invariably had cold shivers. It is literal truth to say that after correction by him scarcely a single line of type survived unaltered. I generally found it cheaper to have the whole article reset, rather than meet the printer's bill for corrections. Even then the anxieties were not over. Dr. Forsyth was quite capable of tele-



graphing for a revised proof, and the revision of his first revision gave one fits. Another weakness of Dr. Forsyth's as a writer was his utter disregard of all consideration about space. He wrote at prodigious length, and would brook no curtailment of his copy. Moreover, he was impatient if a review he had written was not promptly published. I might have waited months for it to be written; but he would not wait a fortnight for it to be printed after he had written it. On the whole, he was not a comfortable contributor.

I once got into very hot water with Dr. Forsyth for suggesting that the sermon he preached before the National Free Church Council was a "traveller." As a matter of fact, I had heard him preach three parts of the sermon in a South London church, and I had read a report of the same sermon in a Yorkshire paper. But he was furious when I hinted that the sermon had been preached before he preached it at the Free Church Council. He had merely, no doubt, been "trying on the dog," so to speak, or getting familiar with the MSS. before the great occasion for which it was written. Anyway, I hurt his feelings; but when on the eve of Christmas I begged his forgiveness because I did not want to carry a feud over the Festival of Peace, I got from him a most gracious letter that wiped away any resentment I might have harboured. And ever afterwards we met as good friends. I cherish the memory of a day I spent with him at Hackney College in the summer of 1919—just before the break-up of his health. The vivacity of his talk that day was an inspiration.

Dr. Forsyth came very near, it seemed to me, to denying all private judgment in religion. Only the expert, he practically said, had a right to a theological opinion, and he was contemptuous upon lay amateurs who dared to entertain a doctrinal opinion that did not come ready made to them from experts like himself. The average man is



baffled as to where authority in religion resides—whether it is in an historical Church, an inspired book, or in the “inner light” in his own soul as it falls upon the Church and the Bible. But Dr. Forsyth seemed to sweep all three away and substitute the expert theologian as the authority. I heard him sneer at Sir Oliver Lodge for venturing to address Congregational ministers on the future life without (as Dr. Forsyth put it) giving a scrap of evidence that he had ever mastered a single Pauline Epistle in the Greek. It made me think of the old story of a Cambridge College organist who fell in Hobson’s run on his way home from a bump supper, but declined to be helped out of the stream by a policeman “who could not play Bach’s fugue in E minor.”

A student once gave a curious exegesis of a text in sermon class at Hackney College and quoted Dr. Campbell Morgan as his authority. Some of the other students smiled. His Principal, Dr. Forsyth (whose razor-edged wit was almost as notable as his profound scholarship), rebuked the students. “I should be very proud,” he said, “if the students of Hackney College knew *the* Bible as well as Dr. Campbell Morgan knows *his* Bible.”

Dean Stanley vowed that Caird’s sermon on “Religion in Common Life” is the greatest sermon in the English tongue, and I suppose it is; but I question whether it had as stupendous an influence on religious thought as Dr. Forsyth’s sermon on “The Holy Father” preached before the Congregational Union at Leicester in 1896. That massive sermon stood out like a watershed in theological thought. Undoubtedly it altered the current of theological thinking in the Free Churches, and especially in Congregationalism, by recovering the sense of the awe of God, which was being lost through over-emphasis on the benevolent fatherhood of God. His use of Coventry Patmore’s exquisite little poem “The Toys” was masterly in its appositeness. For the rest of his life Dr. Forsyth con-

centrated his theological thinking upon the doctrine of the Cross. Certainly he did seem to carry his emphasis on "the cruciality of the Cross" to a point where it obliterated all sense of the eternal love and landed us back in the Old Testament atmosphere of sacrifice to placate—and even change the mind of—an angry God.

Though not a pedant, Dr. Forsyth carried an air of scholarship about with him. This was rather awe-inspiring; but whenever I felt it a little overwhelming I remembered his consuming passion for reading detective stories—good, bad or indifferent. The thought made him seem quite human again.

## CHAPTER XXI

### WOMEN IN JOURNALISM

WOMEN writers had not invaded Fleet Street in force when first I came to London; but an advance guard of lady journalists was making a peaceful penetration into precincts hitherto sacred to the male sex. My brother, Edward Porritt, author of "The Unreformed House of Commons," and later Professor of English Constitutional History at Harvard University, Mass., gave every encouragement to the women who were pioneering in journalism. As London editor of the *Manchester Examiner* he found women peculiarly sensitive to the distinctive atmosphere that a good London Letter must possess, and he employed some of the new-comers freely on this specialized paragraphic work. Miss O'Connor Eccles, now well known as a novelist, practised her 'prentice hand, and Miss Catharine Grant Furley did distinguished work on that London Letter. Fresh from Newnham and full of the new wine of confidence inspired by Miss Millicent Garrett Fawcett's triumph over the senior wrangler of her year came Miss Alice Stronach, who became a familiar figure in Fleet Street. Dogged by physical weakness, Miss Stronach (who paid for her last year at Newnham by writing a history for schools) put up a plucky running fight for twenty-five years. Her stoicism always made me feel humble in her presence. So many of her promising projects collapsed owing to her persistent ill-health that one might have expected her to be soured. But she was "ever a fighter," and from each knock-down blow she rose to fight better. I lost sight of her during the war (when



her free-lance work in Fleet Street almost melted away), and I had made up my mind to write to her, through the Lyceum Club, when I saw her name in the death announcements. Miss Stronach never had the physique for journalism, with its inevitably irregular hours, its sudden and often exorbitant demands on nervous and physical energy and its incessant disappointments and uncertainties. Only a woman of the wiry type or of an extremely phlegmatic or imperturbable temperament ought to venture on the shoals of journalistic life. Still, there are some things in journalism that a woman can do infinitely better than a man, as Miss Jane T. Stoddart has shown.

Miss Honnor Morten was already pouring the sunshine of her gracious presence on Fleet Street when I joined the *Manchester Examiner* staff, and she was frequently in and out of the office, clad in the brown cloak that the poor people of Hoxton loved to see in their drab streets. Miss Morten was always rather on the fringe of journalism than in it. Really she used journalism to push along the social and educational schemes for which she gave up a sumptuous home in one of the old Stuart palaces at Richmond. Her mother was a sister of William Black, the novelist, and her father a close friend of Andrew Lang's. Miss Morten was a great favourite of Herbert Spencer's, who loved her to play billiards with him at Brighton. All the family forces were mobilized upon Honnor Morten to keep her out of public life; but an aimless society life was unthinkable to her. She used to tell us of her first great fight for liberty—her demand of a latchkey from her father. Educated at Bedford College, she determined first to be a nurse, and went through her hospital training. Then she edited the *Hospital*, wrote a guide to nursing, a dictionary for nurses, and started an association—on trade union lines—for nurses. Always she had some ambitious altruistic project in hand, and doing a little journalistic work helped her to forward their progress. For a time she served on the

London School Board, but retired in disgust as a protest against corporal punishment in elementary schools. I often had tea with her at the old School Board buildings on board days. One day I found her in hilarious mood. At that time the Duke of Devonshire, who was President of the Board of Education, had caused much amusement by a terrible display of his total ignorance of the elementary school system which was under his immediate supervision. Mr. Graham Wallas had made merry over the Duke's lapse. Thereupon Miss Morten had tacked on the London School Board notice-board an announcement that ran :

“ That a fund shall be and is hereby opened to raise sufficient money to send Mr. Graham Wallas for one month to Monte Carlo with the Duke of Devonshire, in the sure and certain hope that Mr. Graham Wallas will return knowing something of the world and the Duke knowing something about education.”

Miss Morten was the merriest of saints and delighted in a little mild mischief. She founded a dining club—a parody of the Whitefriars Club—to which she gave the name the Humbug Club. I went to one of the dinners in a Soho restaurant. Miss Morten presided, with an axe suspended by a thread over the table. It was a modern sword of Damocles in readiness to brain the first speaker who ventured on anything approaching mutual admiration.

Tiring of London's “sturm und drang,” Miss Morten carried out a scheme upon which she had long set her heart. She had spent much time at Assisi and had caught the St. Francis spirit. The idea of being wedded to poverty attracted her, and when she received an unexpected legacy she bought a large house at Rotherfield in Sussex and had it reconstructed on monastic lines. There she offered a home for well-to-do middle-aged women with no object in life, on terms which allowed one wing of the building to be filled with ailing children from the slums of



Hoxton. The little ones were housed, fed, taught, and kept in the fresh Sussex hill air until they were quite strong.

The whole household was run on lines of Spartan simplicity and under some curious monastic regulations. One rule insisted on silence at the breakfast table—on the principle that people are never amiable at breakfast. Another rule ordained that all inmates should retire for an hour's quietude during the day. As Miss Morten was the soul of the settlement there was no danger of the gravity of things settling into boredom. She encouraged the little East Londoners staying at Rotherfield to stop in their play and be still for a few minutes whenever they heard the angelus bell of a Catholic monastery near by. She was a firm Protestant, and was writing a life of Edward Colman, the Protestant martyr hanged at Tyburn, when her fatal illness came upon her. The Rotherfield experiment was proving in all senses a success when Miss Morten was stricken with cancer in the throat. I had lunched with her at the Lady Writers' Club—one of a very happy party—one Saturday, and a few days later I received a desperate letter from her saying that she had received her death sentence. I wrote begging to be allowed to go down to see her. In reply I had a touching note. It ran :

DEAR ARTHUR PORRITT,—Your kind letter was a great help, but don't come and see me. My voice has gone and I suffer from restlessness and mindlessness, besides the other ills. I can't "greet the unseen with a cheer"—from physical disabilities! but I can greet it without fear :

For the love of God is larger (sic)  
Than the measures of mankind (sic),  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

I have always wanted to transpose "When wilt Thou save the people" thus :



When wilt thou save the children,  
 Lord God of mercy, when?  
 Not kings and queens and ladies,  
 Not dukes and dames and men.  
 But children, Lord, the children!  
 Flowers of Thy heart, sweet Christ, are they,  
 Let them not wilt in death away  
 Their heritage a sunless day.  
 Lord, save the children!

It seems to me too late to save when childhood is past. I hope I shall live over the L.C.C. election to see someone strike a blow for the children.

I am so glad you have children of your own.

If I pull through this bout I'll write again.

Yours gratefully and in all friendship,

HONNOR MORTEN.

A month later I was allowed to see Miss Morten, as her end was nearing. She was quite cheerful herself, and begged me to take a cheerful farewell. "You know," she said, "I am not going to allow anything to interfere with my enjoying my dying."

Another lady journalist belonging to the pioneer group was Miss Hulda Friederichs, a very versatile writer, who later became Lord Morley's literary secretary. As she worked almost exclusively for the *Pall Mall Gazette* and later for the *Westminster Gazette*, Miss Friederichs hardly took all the risks of a free lance in "Grub Street." On one occasion Miss Friederichs met with an uncomfortable experience. She had attended, as a journalist, a children's ball at the Mansion House, and late at night went to the old *Pall Mall* office in Northumberland Street to write her "copy." On coming out of the office the train of her evening dress caught in the street-door as she closed it. She could not reach the bell to call down the house-keeper, and as it was the dead of night when no one was

passing she had to tear away her dress, leaving the best part of her train behind her.

The early prejudice against lady journalists was strong for a time in the 'nineties, but it has, I believe, died away—largely, I think, because the lady journalists take the rough work with the smooth—asking no concessions for their sex—and because, from the first, they did not undercut men in remuneration. In journalism, as a rule, women are paid equal rates for equal work with men.

## CHAPTER XXII

### SOME CONTRASTS AND A MORAL

ONE of the cardinal differences between the Episcopal Church and the Free Churches is that, while the laymen in the Episcopal Church count for too little, the laymen, or perhaps I should say the wealthy laymen, count for too much in the Free Churches. It is true to say that the Free Churches have been wonderful training schools for laymen, and some of our most eminent politicians, educationists, municipal leaders and social workers owe their impulse towards public service to the experience gained in early life in the Sunday-schools, Young Men's Societies, and other organizations connected with Nonconformist chapels. Still, one cardinal weakness of Nonconformity in the Victorian age was its worship of success. It bred nearly all the Smiles' heroes and it idolized self-made men. So, alongside much that was fine a subtle materialism crept into the very heart of the Free Churches. Even to this day wealth exercises an influence in the Free Churches which merit and ability cannot rival. In the Primitive Methodist Church, for example, it is the custom even yet for anyone who has contributed £100 or more in any year to be given a denominational vote of thanks. The widow's mite is taken as a matter of course. Some of the younger Primitive Methodists have come to realize that this is an anomaly and a contradiction of the very spirit of Jesus, and the anachronism is perhaps doomed to early eradication.

The tyranny of the cheque-book is, I think, felt more in Free Churchism than in Anglicanism. I remember many instances; but the most glaring occurred in a well-known



West London Congregational Church. The minister of this church, a famous preacher, laid it down as a rule that all candidates for membership should go through a Catechumen course. But when a certain millionaire presented himself for membership the rule was waived in his case. I once heard another famous minister defending an official whose efficiency was being questioned, with the remark: "Still, he gets on so well with our rich people." At Whitefield's Central Mission in Silvester Horne's time it was understood that the layman invited to preside at the annual meeting should be a man who would contribute £100 to the mission's funds. He might spoil the meeting by his prosy speech or by his pomposity, but his cheque for £100 was accepted as covering a multitude of sins. A man who reached the very apex of his professional calling as an actuary once told me that experience had led him to conclude that Congregationalism had no use for anyone who had not a long purse. He was a brilliant speaker and was a man whose spiritual force singled him out for leadership, not only in his own church, but in the denomination; but he could not compete with successful tradesmen in the liberality of his donations. The Free Churches boast an equality in fellowship, which in practice does not exist. Perhaps, though ideally beautiful, such equality is not possible. Still, the deference paid to rich men in Free Churches is a fatal barrier to any real *rapprochement* with the working classes.

Even if the Reunion of the Churches never comes it is a priceless advantage due to the growing entente between church and chapel, to have got rid of libellous misconceptions on both sides. I remember when Nonconformists were quite convinced that no real gospel was preached in Established Churches, and when churchmen believed that Nonconformists had no idea of reverential worship. Now I suppose more Anglicans go occasionally to Free

Churches than at any time since 1662, and more Free Church people join occasionally with Episcopalians at "Common Prayer" than ever in their history. And with this new spirit of fraternity has come a better general understanding. Thirty years ago Churchmen looked upon Nonconformists as "political dissenters," whose dissociation from the Established Church was due to political feeling even more than to religious principle. And the Nonconformists of that time regarded the Church of England (to borrow a phrase coined later by Miss Maude Royden) as merely "the Conservative party at prayer." To have got out of this vicious circle of misconception is an infinite gain.

When the history of the church unity movement comes to be written I imagine that the historian will be compelled to recognize that the new and happier relationships between the churches, Established and Free, Scottish as well as English, date from the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. Really the movement began long before the Conference—in the foreign mission fields, where a comity spirit had taken form within the previous ten years. But "Edinburgh, 1910," was a public demonstration at home of the wonderful degree of co-operation that was in being among missionaries of all the churches in India, China, Africa and the isles of the South Seas. The Edinburgh Conference was a pinnacle in ecclesiastical time—if putting it so does not mix the metaphors. It knocked the glass off the denominational party walls and ushered in a new age in missionary history. Since 1910 all the British missionary societies have federated themselves into a conference, meeting annually, with standing committees meeting frequently, and with a staff of experts in missionary matters as secretaries and officials. Either as a journalist, or as a representative of the London Missionary Society, I have been present at four or five of the



annual conferences of this association of the British missionary societies, and the spectacle of High Churchmen foregathering with Quakers, Evangelical Anglicans conferring with Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists, all on an equal footing, has hardly a parallel as a demonstration of essential unity. Here the ritualistic lion lies down with the schismatic lamb—or rather, links forces to devise methods of co-operation in producing missionary literature, planning missionary propaganda campaigns at home, devising courses of special training for missionary candidates, facing governments with a united front, and even in avoiding overlapping in the foreign fields by limiting frontiers and defining spheres of influence. The harmony and camaraderie that prevail at these conferences of British missionary societies would be a source of sheer bewilderment to the ghosts of missionary society leaders of a past generation, could they but emerge from their graves as visitants at the conferences. The growing amity in the mission fields was undoubtedly one of the factors that led the bishops at the Pan Anglican Conference of 1920 to make their historic pronouncement appealing for reunion.

Dr. John Mott contributed hugely to the influence of the Edinburgh Conference and the work of the Edinburgh Continuation Committee. He presided at Edinburgh, and won eternal fame by peremptorily ringing down a British bishop who was going on speaking after the gong had intimated that his time was up. Perhaps even more audacious was Dr. Mott's democratic spirit shown in the selection of the speakers from those who sent up their cards to indicate their wish to take part in the discussion. Lord Kinnaird sent up his card several times, but Dr. Mott did not call upon him to speak. Lord Kinnaird did not like it at all, but Dr. Mott is an American, and *que voulez vous?*



Newspaper readers with memories that go back thirty years cannot fail, I imagine, to notice how scantily religious matters are reported nowadays. In 1890, when I first attended the May Assemblies of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, provision had to be made at the press tables for about thirty reporters. Nowadays, three or four press seats meet all the needs and even those seats are not often occupied after the first day's assembly. In 1890 the *Daily News* devoted two or three columns to the Union's daily proceedings. The *Times* generally set apart a column. No London daily failed to give some report, and the leading provincial papers printed the Press Association's special daily column. Nowadays, all these papers either severely abbreviate their reports or ignore the Congregational Union altogether. I do not think the revaluation of values made by the modern editor wholly explains this change. Thirty years ago the Congregational Union focused Nonconformist opinion on many great issues, moral, ecclesiastical and political, and its resolutions, with the weighty speeches by which they were advocated, were of the highest news value. Nonconformity was then the backbone of Liberalism, and Liberalism was fighting for civil and religious equality. An utterance by Dr. Dale or Dr. Guinness Rogers was a matter of national concern. To-day the Congregational Union scarcely succeeds in voicing Free Church opinion on great issues. Political questions are now mainly economic issues, and upon economic issues the Churches (as Dr. Reaveley Glover has said) are in alliance with capitalism and economic orthodoxy—or, at all events, the leaders are, and the younger and more ardent spirits are mute, if not gagged, at the denominational assembly. Even the moral issues lying beneath such questions as industrialism, housing and public health do not always stir the Congregational Union to challenge Sam Weller's dictum that "Whatever is, is." This is true in

a large measure, too, of the Baptist Union, though Dr. Clifford has been accustomed to raise his mighty voice in that assembly and to speak like a modern Amos on righteousness in the sphere of economics. This policy of "playing for safety" on vexed issues explains more than the neglect by the press of religious gatherings—it practically explains the studied aloofness of the working classes from organized Christianity. After the war all the Free Church assemblies shared the moral numbness of the English people. A few presentations at Court and access by some leading ministers to the Downing Street breakfast table have silenced some Nonconformist consciences on politico-moral issues. But the young and eager spirits are now becoming vocal.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### GREAT MISSIONARIES

**I**N a journalistic capacity, and also as a director for many years of the London Missionary Society, I have been brought into close contact with many distinguished foreign missionaries, and I hold missionaries, as a body, in the highest regard. Among the most interesting, and, indeed, heroic men I have known, I place three missionaries—Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell of Labrador, Rev. Sam Pollard of Yunnan, and Rev. Charles W. Abel of Kwato. In their differing spheres, one amid the eternal snows, the second in the wastes of South China, and the third in tropical Papua, all these three missionaries have been great civilizing forces and notable pioneers of practical Christianity. It is twelve years ago since I met Dr. Grenfell for the first time. I sought an interview with him on one of his rare visits to London. A more engaging personality it would be hard to discover. His sincerity leaps out at one. Later you discover his versatility and his devotedness. He hates to be lionized, laughs when you treat him as a hero, and insists that his life in Labrador, though a bit rough, is the only life worth living because it is a life of service rewarded by immediate results in the happiness and well-being of the people he serves.

I am always meeting men who, when the ice has been broken and a confidential mood has been established, confess that they are Moody converts. One of the finest men I know, a sanitary inspector who went through the retreat from Mons as a stretcher-bearer, surprised me one day by saying that D. L. Moody made a man of him. Mr. A. C.



Benson has confessed in one of his books that Moody at Cambridge made religion a reality to him—son of an Archbishop as he is. Dr. Grenfell is a Moody man, too. It was Moody's adroit closing of a man, who was offering an inordinately long prayer at his Whitechapel Mission, with the remark, "While our brother finishes his prayer we will sing hymn 75," that captured Dr. Grenfell, who was groping for his hat to beat a retreat out of the tent. He stayed, heard Moody, and resolved that his Christianity must henceforth be the mainspring of his being. Through Moody's influence he volunteered for medical missionary work among the deep-sea fishermen on the North Sea trawlers. With them he went to the Labrador Coast, and, finding both the white men and the Eskimos suffering from sickness and disease, and eternally harassed by debt, he started his Labrador Mission. What he has done for Labrador is comparable with what Livingstone did for Central Africa. He opened the country for commerce, and healed an open sore of servitude to exploiters which was akin to the slave trade that Livingstone's journeys brought to an end. In short, he has civilized Labrador.

Ever since our first meeting I have enjoyed Dr. Grenfell's friendship, and whenever he is in England we renew our association. At our first meeting Dr. Grenfell expressed a desire to meet Mr. Silvester Horne, and I brought the two intrepid pioneers in Christian enterprise together over a luncheon table. On a later visit, at Dr. Grenfell's request, I introduced him to a group of Labour leaders. Then came the war, and for three years England did not see Dr. Grenfell. But when peace came, and he returned to England, almost his first question, by letter, was a request to hear from me whether the leaders of the Labour Party still drew their inspiration from Jesus. Like Lord Haldane, he seemed to see no idealism in English politics outside the Labour Party, and though he comes of a Conservative family, he wanted to meet some of the

Labour leaders again. It was characteristic of Dr. Grenfell; party or sectarian prejudice is foreign to him. "If I found a shoeblack," he once told me, "with the spirit of Jesus Christ, I should want to sit at his feet and learn his secret."

The Rev. Samuel Pollard, of Yunnan, the second of my modern missionary heroes, was a United Methodist. Had he served under one of the great societies, e.g., the Church Missionary Society or the London Missionary Society, his name would have been a household word in English religious homes. He, too, was a dauntless pioneer and a man of quite magnetic personality; but his achievements gained little publicity outside the borders of his own denomination. His work among the Maio tribe in Yunnan led to one of those mysterious "mass movements" of a whole people from heathenism to Christianity which delight people at home who read missionary magazines, but are apt to overwhelm the embarrassed missionary who has to face the avalanche. Mr. Pollard's faith and sagacity stood the test, but the strain killed him. One of his feats was to reduce the tribal language to writing, create a grammar for it, and then give the people a translation of the New Testament. To all the other qualities of Mr. Pollard must be added the gift of a delightful literary style and an unfailing eye for the picturesque. Without a doubt he might have made a reputation in literature, but I doubt if he ever gave a thought to making a reputation of any kind. He was far too disinterested to be ambitious.

The Rev. Charles W. Abel, my third modern missionary hero, is at once a wit, a sportsman, a statesman, a captain of industry, a splendid platform speaker and a missionary whose resourcefulness and enterprise have always made him a problem to the missionary committee in London which administers his field of operations. The



martyred James Chalmers inducted Charles Abel into the joys and thrills of missionary pioneering. Together they explored some of the rivers of western New Guinea, penetrated among cannibals who had never seen a white man, and escaped the cooking-pots of the savages by nothing but their inspired effrontery. To hear Mr. Abel tell of a night spent in a steam launch stranded on a mud bank two miles below a cannibal village upon whose bewildered inhabitants they had inflicted a surprise visit is to experience a real thrill. It was as realistic an episode as has ever been filmed for the cinematograph. Mr. Abel's work as a pioneer in missions has been on industrial lines. He has proved that the Papuan savage, who, it was imagined, was beyond the power of civilization or Christianity to tame, can be taught how to become an efficient carpenter, a capable boat-builder, a reliable rubber cultivator, a decent potter, an excellent blacksmith and a first-rate sportsman in the cricket and football fields. Australian statesmen are not all of them sympathetic to the foreign missionary enterprise among the Papuans, but when a senatorial commission visited Mr. Abel at Kwato, they expressed utter amazement at the transformation of savages into civilized citizens effected by Mr. Abel's unconventional methods. "Kwato," they said, "is our idea of a model mission station." And when a deputation from the London Missionary Society paid a visit of inspection to Kwato, they expressed their astonishment at the spiritual level attained in the native church there and their delight in the educational standard in the school. Recently Mr. Abel has been permitted to take the Kwato mission out of the jurisdiction of the London Missionary Society for a period of years, so that under the ægis of a non-dividend-paying association, capitalized by English and Australian Congregational laymen, he may carry his experimental work in industrial missions to a still more ambitious stage.

When his old fellow students at Cheshunt College meet



and mention Abel someone recalls some witticism of his young days. And one recollection never fails to raise a laugh. Abel, one Saturday, was leaning down buckling on his batting pads ready for his innings, when the little daughter of one of the professors—a famous Old Testament scholar—passed through the pavilion, caught Mr. Abel bending, and gave him a resounding smack. Her father saw what she had done and gravely rebuked her. He told her, severely, to go and apologize for her rudeness. “Oh, don’t be hard on her, Doctor,” said Abel quietly. “I expect she thought my extremity was her opportunity.”

My acquaintance with James Chalmers, the famous Papuan missionary who was killed and eaten by cannibals at Goaribari, was of the slightest. I met him only once, and that was at a crowded reception where he was the lion of the occasion. He was a big burly man with black hair that fell like a lion’s mane down his neck. Physical courage was stamped all over him; and he gave one just the slightest impression of aggressiveness. Possibly living among savages tends to make a man aggressive. Chalmers’ eyes flashed defiantly and restlessly. His manner, though genial, was what a schoolboy would call “swanky.” I thought at the time that he did not object to lionizing. But I am sure I misjudged him, for everyone who knew him well vouches for his genuine humility and his extreme kindness of heart. His life was one long romance—a succession of exciting experiences, hair-breadth escapes, dashing pioneering excursions among the wildest people on the globe, and splendid endeavours to carry a gospel of love to people who knew only hates and fears. He was a spiritualized buccaneer, saved, perhaps, by the grace of God from being a pirate. Chalmers cast a spell over Robert Louis Stevenson—which is a rare testimonial to Chalmers. They met on a Pacific steamboat when the novelist was fleeing to Samoa to escape death from tuber-

culosis and Chalmers was trying to save his wife's life by a sea voyage. Stevenson, who wrote romances, fell captive to the man who lived them. He wrote home to Mr. Colvin praising Chalmers to the skies. "He is as big as a church," was his spacious way of putting it. To Chalmers after they parted Stevenson wrote, "O, Tamate, Tamate; how different my life might have been if I had met you earlier." After meeting Chalmers, Stevenson was always an out and out defender of foreign missions. He had no patience with the criticisms of missions by globe-trotters who examine them through the end of a whisky glass. Possibly that masterpiece of philippics that Stevenson wrote to smash the traducers of Father Damien was inspired by his chance meeting with James Chalmers. All the time he was in Samoa Stevenson was the friend of the missionaries, and he took their view as to the proper treatment of the natives. Now that he is dead the Samoan natives respect Stevenson's memory by a beautiful regulation. By order of the chiefs no native must discharge a gun within earshot of Vailima lest the birds that sing around poor R. L. S.'s lonely grave might be frightened and suspend their requiem.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### AMERICA AND AMERICAN HUMOUR

ONE of my pleasantest journalistic jaunts was the visit—my second—I paid to America to represent the *Christian World* at the Fourth International Congregational Council at Boston in July, 1920. About a hundred and fifty addresses were given, and perhaps the only one that anyone present will remember in, say, 1925, came from a layman—Mr. Raymond Robins. Behind the man was a life story. Raymond Robins was “a Philadelphia lawyer” in San Francisco when gold was discovered in the Yukon. He made a dash for Klondike, and on the way fell in with an aristocratic Roman Catholic priest who had gone into the wilds as a missionary in the belief that perhaps, a thousand years hence, the “magnetic north” would be the centre of civilization and that it needed Christianity before it got civilized. Leaving the priest, Raymond Robins with a comrade pressed his way towards Klondike. A blinding blizzard overtook them and they lay down to die. Robins made one last kick for life, and struggling through the snow-drifts came across a cross glistening white even through the snow flakes. That cross again—that symbol of self-sacrifice! Just past it he discovered an Indian village with shelter for himself and his comrade. They went on to the Klondike, where Robins struck pay-gravel in his “claim” and returned with an independency for life. Chicago attracted him as a city that would offer him a good time. There he came into intimate contact with a Congregational minister slaving in a slum. Again the Cross! This third time Raymond Robins yielded to



its spell, and ever since he has lived his life to serve the underdog. At Boston this life-story was the background of his speech. He repudiated Bolshevism and Socialism—the one as hateful, the other as alien to man's nature. But he denounced human exploitation and pleaded for all industry to be elevated into public service. The audience rose to him—he held them for over an hour in the hollow of his hand. But on the platform an ex-chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales sat ostentatiously showing his contempt for such idealism, and another ex-chairman of the same Union barely concealed his boredom. Afterwards I found that almost to a man the Congregational laymen dismissed the speech as subversive of the social order, while the older Congregational ministers, satisfied that Jesus has nothing to say on economics, dismissed the utterance as impracticable. But with scarcely an exception the younger ministers recognized an authentic note of prophecy in Raymond Robins's assertion that when property rights cut across human rights, property rights must yield.

Dr. George A. Gordon, of New Old South Congregational Church, Boston—the most influential pulpit in New England—bears a strange facial resemblance to the late Dr. John Watson ("Ian Maclaren"). I was introduced to Dr. Gordon when I was in Boston in 1920 by a Scottish Divinity professor who was a student at Mansfield College, Oxford, when Dr. Gordon lectured there about fifteen years ago. There was much curiosity among the Mansfield students as to when the name of Jesus Christ would be first mentioned by Dr. Gordon. The first, second, and third lecture went by, and still the sacred name went unnamed. In the fourth lecture Dr. Gordon referred to Jesus, and the impious Mansfield students welcomed it with a cheer. Dr. Gordon is commemorated by F. G. Peabody who dedicates one of his books to the Boston preacher with the lines :

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“Still at your post you stand, high in the lighthouse tower,  
Guarding the way of life, speaking the word of power;  
Resolute, tender, wise, full of the love of truth,  
Tending the flame of Christ as it marks the channel of youth.”

Dr. Gordon undertook to read a paper on the Originality of Jesus before the International Congregational Council at Boston (1920), but he sold it beforehand as an article to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the delegates were able to read it before Dr. Gordon delivered it. With a copy of the *Atlantic Monthly* in my hands I followed Dr. Gordon's reading of his paper, watching his variations and correcting them in pencil. It was one of the outstanding utterances of the Boston Council; but somehow its premature publication robbed it of *eclat*.

New Old South Church had been seeking a minister for some time when the name of a young preacher, somewhere up state, was mentioned—this was in 1884—as a possible minister. George A. Gordon—for it was he—agreed to preach “with a view,” and the widow of the previous minister of Old South, who made it her duty to make every minister who preached there feel at home, sent her daughter to meet him at the station and to convoy him to his host's house. Naturally she was eager to hear all about the young preacher candidate, and when her daughter got back from welcoming the visitor the mother asked: “What is he like?” The daughter threw up her hands: “Oh, mother,” she replied, “he's a regular micky”—(a New England equivalent for our word hobble-de-hoy). But uncouth appearance notwithstanding, George A. Gordon was invited to New Old South, and accepted the invitation. In due course, too, the young lady who had called him a “micky” became Mrs. George Gordon.

The city of Washington is “a dream in marble”; but I confess that the spots which stir my deepest emotions in the American capital are the ramshackle theatre where



Abraham Lincoln was shot on that Good Friday evening in 1864, and the shabby little house opposite where he was carried to die. To stand in the corner of the back bedroom exactly upon the spot where the bed stood when Lincoln drew his last breath moved me more even than standing on Plymouth Rock. The tremendous humanity of Lincoln lifts him into a category of his own. Concerning Lincoln, my friend Dr. Lynn Harold Hough recently told me a characteristic story that was quite new to me. When he was President, living at the White House, Lincoln was accessible to anybody who called. One day a big Yankee from the north walked into Lincoln's room, shook the President warmly by the hand, and said: "Mr. Lincoln, up in Illinois, where I come from, we trust nobody but God and Abraham Lincoln." Honest Abe smiled and his eyes twinkled, and then he slowly drawled: "Yes, and I guess you are just about half right."

The inscription, "In God we trust," on American coins may possibly explain the curious profanity that strikes an Englishman in the United States. When it gets adopted for use as a business-house motto: "In God we trust; all others pay spot cash," an Englishman sustains a moral jerk. Americans are a phrase-ridden people; but some of their catch-words stick pleasantly in one's memory. "Say it in Flowers" in a Boston florist's window is delightful. And the notice on Boston Common warning people off the grass is distinctly double-barrelled. "Keep off! If you want to roam join the navy." I link this with the old man, who, at a missionary meeting, made a special petition for medical missions "which, oh, Lord, so to speak, kill two birds with one stone."

In New York, so the story goes, a group of men were discussing who was the greatest man that had ever lived. Cæsar, Homer, Alexander, Napoleon, Lincoln—all the



great world heroes were mentioned and canvassed. Then someone suggested the name of Jesus, and in the silence that fell unanimity seemed certain, when a Jew broke in with the remark: "Yes, but the fellow who invented interest was no fool."

The brightest American story I gleaned in the United States was about a man who was promised a day's shooting and boasted beforehand of what a good time he would have. A friend met him as he returned from his day out and asked: "Have you had a good day?" "Naw!" he answered grumpily. "No sport?" "Naw!" "Didn't you shoot anything?" "I shot my dog!" "Shot your dog—was he mad?" "Well, you may bet he wasn't so darned pleased!"

Prophets who foretell the end of the world easily find people ready to believe them in the land of fancy religions. One Missouri prophet with a large following announced the exact hour of the day when the world would end. He fixed four o'clock on a September morning. The farming folk accepted his prophecy as inspired and made preparations for "the day." Dressed in their best they rose early to await the event. One old couple, a farmer and his wife, dressed in their best night clothes, climbed on the roof of their house. Just as they reached the highest gable a corn-stack that had been smouldering burst into flames on the horizon line. Jonathan looked gravely at his old wife. "'Ria," he said, "our luck's out again."

There died a few years ago a Baptist minister, Rev. Robert Burdette, who was highly esteemed in Boston as a preacher, but known all over the United States as Bob Burdette, the popular humorous lecturer. He often told stories against himself, but his pet story was one where he scored by his wit. Into his vestry at Tremont Temple

there came one day a lady, a leader of the spiritualist movement in Boston. Her husband, she told Dr. Burdette, had died suddenly on the previous day, and had expressed a dying wish that Dr. Burdette should conduct his funeral. "But your husband was a spiritualist; would it be more in keeping with his beliefs if you had a spiritualist to officiate at his funeral?" he asked. "It was his last wish that you should do so!" the lady persisted, and Dr. Burdette, feeling he could do no other, complied. The funeral service was in the lady's drawing-room, and the coffin, buried in flowers, stood on a bier in the room. Dr. Burdette went through the burial service and gave a short address, referring in terms of Christian faith to the happy life of the dear departed brother in the world beyond the grave. When he sat down the widow jumped up and told the assembled company that while Dr. Burdette had been speaking she had been in spiritualistic communion with her dead husband, who assured her that Dr. Burdette's picture of the after-life was wholly fictitious. When the lady had finished Dr. Burdette rose and quietly replied that he had been a Christian minister for nearly forty years, and in the course of his ministry had delivered over two thousand funeral addresses. "But," he added, "this is the first time in all my long experience that I have ever had any back-chat from the corpse."

Dr. Burdette had had the misfortune to lose an eye, and he wore an artificial one. Two pious ladies in his congregation were concerned about their pastor's infirmity, and one day they told him that they had been praying regularly for a long time that the Lord, if it pleased Him, should restore Dr. Burdette's lost eye. Dr. Burdette was deeply touched by their solicitude as well as by their faith. It was so kind of them, he said, to take such concern over his eye. Then the irrepressible humorist broke out, "But," he said with a twinkle in his sound eye, "don't you think,

my dear ladies, that while you are praying about my artificial eye you might pray also about your own false teeth? ”

Canon Ainger, who was master of the Temple when I came to London, and to whom I was irresistibly drawn by his devotion to Charles Lamb, told a story of an old lady who went to consult her minister. She had lost nearly all her teeth, and was gravely disturbed as to whether it was right for a pious woman to wear false teeth. “It will be all the easier for you to swallow the camel if you don’t,” the minister answered. Canon Ainger looked more like a seraph than anyone I have ever seen. He had wonderful eyes—like James Russell Lowell, whom a waiting-maid once described “as a gentleman with the coaxingest eyes in all the world.” There was an ethereality about Canon Ainger that made one think of the mediæval saints.



## CHAPTER XXV

### A SATIRIST IN THE PULPIT

SIDNEY SMITH can hardly have been more sardonic in the pulpit—more caustic in his wit, or mordant in his humour than Dr. W. L. Watkinson, the veteran Wesleyan Methodist preacher. He was once described as a converted Heine. Dr. Watkinson has one odd characteristic—a triumphant sniff with which he punctuates his remarks and draws attention to any witticism that might be possibly overlooked. He has had many imitators in his own and other denominations, but, he used to say, “they can’t imitate my sniffs.” Exceedingly tall, even to the point of attenuation, he cuts a rather droll figure in the pulpit. “They say, the exponents of heredity say, that we carry our ancestors about with us just as if we were omnibuses,” he observed one day. Then, stroking his lean sides, he added dryly, “If it’s true, I’m sorry for my ancestors. They must be riding on the knife-board.” Dr. Watkinson reads everything, especially in natural science, and he used to enrich his sermons with illustrations from botany, geology, astronomy, zoology and every other ’ology. Yet rather inconsistently his sharpest barbs were directed at the dogmatism of the scientists. In private Dr. Watkinson is the gentlest of men—a Tory to the core in politics and theology, but the politest of listeners to even radical views of both. In conversation his verbal fencing is delightful, and he has sufficiently fine a sense of humour to appreciate a joke against himself. As he scores off others, he never resents being scored off. When Mr. Hugh Price Hughes was campaigning for Methodist reunion he moved a reso-

lution in the Wesleyan Conference on the subject, and by the magic of his fiery eloquence convinced the conference that from all over England a clamant cry for union was rising. The conference was about to vote when Dr. Watkinson rose, not to make a speech, as he explained, but to tell a story of his mother taking him as a small boy to a ventriloquial entertainment in a county town hall. "In the middle of the entertainment there was a loud knocking on the hall door. It was terrible. It seemed as if a mob was trying to break into the hall. We thought there was a riot outside, and we stood up in a fever of anxiety. But there wasn't any riot. It was only the ventriloquist." Dr. Watkinson sat down, and the conference seizing the point rocked with laughter. The Price Hughes resolution was promptly shelved. Mr. Price Hughes was furious, and it was long before he forgave Dr. Watkinson.

Time brought Mr. Price Hughes an opportunity for revenge. "How is it," someone asked him, "that Dr. Watkinson is such a popular preacher in the country but never succeeds in his own circuit?" Mr. Price Hughes's eyes twinkled—his chance had come. "Well," he said tartly, "I suppose everybody enjoys caper sauce when they eat boiled mutton, but who could live on a diet of nothing but caper sauce?" During a dangerous illness the rumour reached a newspaper office that Dr. Watkinson was dying. "He'll greet the unseen with a jeer, no doubt," a satirist remarked with Watkinsonian savagery.

Dr. Watkinson's wit spared no one. "My wife and I celebrated our thirty-ninth wedding day last week," he once told a meeting. "I said to Mrs. Watkinson, 'My dear, if I had to preach to-day there is only one text I could take—Paul's words: "Forty stripes have I save one."'"

On one of his preaching engagements he was entertained by an ostentatious parvenu who showed his guest with pride over his grounds. "I've cut a new carriage



drive," he said, "and planted trees to make an avenue. They're elms; they'll never be any benefit to me—they grow too slowly. But I've planted them for my posteriors." Dr. Watkinson sniffed ominously. "Wouldn't birches have been better?" he asked dryly.

To a host who smilingly chided him for getting up late by saying that he was a bad pupil of John Wesley, whose habit it was to be up and in his study by 5 A.M., Dr. Watkinson promptly retorted: "Yes, and if I had been married to Mrs. John Wesley I should have been in my study by four o'clock in the mornings."

When the first Œcumenical Conference was held Dr. Watkinson was elected its president. Hugh Price Hughes asked petulantly: "What is the good of electing a man with one foot in the grave?" Someone told Dr. Watkinson. "Ah," he said with his characteristic sniff. "It's the other foot he is afraid of."

A Wesleyan Baronet was talking, in a group of Methodists, about his old school. He could not say much in praise of it. "Why, do you know," he said indignantly, "I was punished there once for telling the truth?" "Well, it cured you," retorted Dr. Watkinson in his driest tone.

In Rome Dr. Watkinson shocked the curator of the fowls whose descent is traced direct from the cock that crowed when Peter made the great betrayal, by asking in the most matter-of-fact tone: "Now just tell me one thing—do those hens lay?" The curator only just managed to ward off a fainting fit at such appalling irreverence to the sacred birds.

Travelling across France Dr. Watkinson found himself alone in a railway carriage with a Roman Catholic priest, who opened conversation. The story goes that the conversation went thus:

R.C. Priest: "Are you a priest?"

Dr. Watkinson: "No; a minister!"

R.C. Priest: "What denomination?"



Dr. Watkinson : "The Wesleyan Methodist Church ! "

R.C. Priest : "Are you married ? "

Dr. Watkinson : "Yes ! "

R.C. Priest : "Have you any children ? "

Dr. Watkinson : "Yes ! "

The conversation lapsed for a few minutes. Then the initiative came from Dr. Watkinson :

Dr. Watkinson : "Are you a minister ? "

R.C. Priest (*haughtily*) : "No ; a priest ! "

Dr. Watkinson : "What denomination ? "

R.C. Priest (*in a shocked tone*) : "The Holy Roman Catholic Church."

Dr. Watkinson : "Are you married ? "

R.C. Priest (*aghast*) : "No ! No ! ! "

Dr. Watkinson : "Have you any children ? "

R.C. Priest (*horrified*) : "No ! No ! ! No ! ! ! "

The rest of the journey passed in silence.

One day, just before the war, I met Dr. Watkinson walking lazily along Fleet Street. I stopped him to inquire about his health. He had been revelling in Nietzsche, he told me. "Can you read him with patience ? " I asked. "I read him with delight," he said. "He's a perfect tonic to me. He challenges everything I believe and live by. Why, Nietzsche has made me go over all my fundamentals and make sure that my feet of faith are on rock, not sand."

In his "Fearnley Lecture," one of his best known books, Dr. Watkinson paused in his argument to slash fiercely at George Eliot for her liaison with George Henry Lewes. He referred with pity to "the poor injured wife" in the background. Partially at my suggestion a cousin of George Eliot, the Rev. William Mottram, a deeply respected Congregational minister, published a little book in which, with indisputable facts to corroborate him, he defended George Eliot's character against her maligners. Then came the death of Mrs. Lewes which loosed the lips

of others who knew the true story of Lewes and George Eliot. The "injured wife" of Dr. Watkinson's "Fearnley Lecture" was shown to be a fickle woman who had twice run away with Thornton Hunt. George Henry Lewes, who had forgiven her infidelity on the first occasion, finally broke with her.

It was before the institution of the divorce court, and Lewes could get no release from his unfaithful wife save by an Act of Parliament, only to be secured at a prohibitive price. Had he lived twenty years later Lewes could have gone to the divorce court, got a *decree nisi* dissolving his first marriage, and then, after a short interval, might have legally married George Eliot. Meanwhile he was left with two boys, deserted by their mother. To these boys George Eliot behaved as a mother. She cared for them and paid for their education. Moreover, she made financial provision for Mrs. Lewes, and that lady lived to the end of her life upon George Eliot's bounty. When these facts were made public I drew Dr. Watkinson's attention to them, and respectfully suggested that the harsh passage about George Eliot should be deleted from the "Fearnley Lecture." Dr. Watkinson accepted the suggestion with a readiness that showed his desire to be just, even to the memory of a woman he disliked. He at once wrote to the publishers of the "Fearnley Lecture" asking that no further copies should be printed from the old plates.

Another of Dr. Watkinson's *bon mots* occurs to me: "I heard the other day," he said once in a platform speech, "that a house had fallen down at Ealing. Of course it fell down. It was a new house. It hadn't been papered. There was nothing to hold it together."

Listening to Dr. Watkinson was always a novel experience because one was always trembling on the verge of the unexpected. Some of his *obiter dicta* deserve preservation—e.g. :

"The Bible is the radium of the moral world."

"The frail snowflake has sculptured continents."

"The religion that costs nothing is worth exactly what it costs."

"We estimate ourselves in our Sunday clothes; our neighbours reckon us up in our shirtsleeves."

"Sincerity is a synonym for safety."

Dr. Watkinson's appearances in the pulpit have grown fewer and fewer as the years creep on—he is now eighty-four—but his mind is as fresh and vivid as ever, and his wit never fails.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### A MISCELLANY OF MEMORIES

**D**URING my first two years in London I had—as I was engaged on a daily newspaper—to work in Fleet Street on Sunday evenings. There was seldom much work to be done, however, and I frequently went across to Newton Hall, off Fetter Lane, to hear Mr. Frederic Harrison lecture to the Positivists. His audience was small as a rule, and of a pronounced highbrow type; and the atmosphere of the dingy little hall was peculiarly cold and forbidding. Mr. Harrison's passion for humanity was very attractive to me, and he opened windows of the mind by his comprehensive sweep over things said and done in history. I discovered the existence of these Positivist meetings in a curious way, for they were never advertised generally. One Sunday, in my early months in London, an event happened upon which it was necessary that my paper, the *Manchester Examiner*, should have a special article in Monday's issue. The man who had all the facts about the matter was a Mr. Goatby, who lived somewhere at Kensington. I was sent off to his home bearing a letter inviting him either to come into Fleet Street and write the article or to dictate it to me on the spot. Mr. Goatby, I found, was not at home, but I was told that he had gone to Newton Hall to hear Mr. Frederic Harrison. I went on to Newton Hall, but as I did not know Mr. Goatby by sight, I was in difficulties. The attendant at Newton Hall did not know Mr. Goatby either, but he found a way out. He walked up to the platform just as Mr. Harrison was finishing his discourse

and explained that a young man was seeking Mr. Goatby. Mr. Frederic Harrison announced this fact to the audience—and did it, too, in a most kindly way—with the result that I found my man, convoyed him across to the office in Fleet Street, where he wrote the article, which was sent over the private wire and duly appeared in the *Manchester Examiner* next day. I remember being congratulated by my editor for my pertinacious pursuit of my quarry. “You’ll get there, my boy,” he said, and the praise was fragrant to me. Mr. Frederic Harrison’s little act of kindness won him a youthful admirer, and whenever I have heard him speak, or read anything he has written, my attitude has ever since been coloured by this recollection of my first and only encounter with him.

An event that stands out in my memory very vividly, though it is thirty years ago, was the funeral of Charles Bradlaugh. The burial took place at Brookwood Necropolis, near Woking. An immense concourse of people gathered in the cemetery. What drove the occasion deeply into my memory was the total absence of religious ceremony. No prayer was said at the grave. Indeed, not a single word was uttered. The remains, placed in a light coffin, were lowered into the earth in a quite unceremonious fashion—as if carrion were being hustled out of sight—and then, one by one, the spectators filed past the open grave, and, picking up a handful of earth, threw it upon the casket. Many of the men put pebbles and little clods of earth from the graveside in their pockets, evidently to preserve them as souvenirs. Although the deep emotion of the multitude of mourners was impressive, I shuddered all over my being at the stark materialism of such a funeral. Bradlaugh was an avowed and militant atheist, and any religious ceremony would perhaps have been the apotheosis of unreality at his interment; but I came away heart-frozen. It only then dawned on me that loss of faith in the con-



tinuity of human personality after death gives death an appalling victory.

Journalists who move close to what George Meredith calls "the very furnace-hissing" of events almost lose the capacity to experience a real thrill. But I imagine that no journalist has "soul so dead" that he can see a big ship launched without just a fluttering of his heartstrings. Certainly I never felt the tension of a crucial moment so acutely as when I watched the *Britannic* (twin ship to the *Titanic* and the *Olympic*) leave the slips in Harland and Wolff's yard at Belfast. Even the shipbuilders themselves are not immune from the quivering excitement of that drear, everlasting moment when the props have been knocked from under the hull and a soft whistle announces to the assembled crowd that the ship is free at last to leave the slips. The silence is so heavy that literally one hears the breathing of one's neighbours. "Will she go?" The question flashes through every brain. Anxiety is tense. A second passes, two, three, perhaps four; and still the great ship, towering high in the air, stands poised and motionless. Then the yard hands raise a cheer. Quick to detect the first faint movement, their eager eyes have observed what to others is an imperceptible stirring of the dead weight. Two seconds more and the unpractised eyes of the spectators—the guests of the launching—catch the movement. Then the mighty hull begins to glide with ever accelerating speed down the greased ways till, like a rushing wind, she speeds down the slips. Her bows cleave the waters amid a roar of cheering, renewed again as she is pulled up within an incredibly small distance by the drag chains. With the excitement still tense, an official of the shipyard goes through the quaint ritual of fixing up the number of the next ship to be built in the slip from which the leviathan has just been released. A launch, especially of a great liner, is a spectacle that never



stales, and those seconds of uncertainty afford a sensation of a lifetime.

The old custom of christening a ship with a bottle of wine and asking for the blessing of God upon her through the prayers of a clergyman has been abandoned by Messrs. Harland and Wolff.

"No, sir," said an old shipbuilder in the Belfast yard, "we don't make any fuss of that sort now over a new ship. We just builds her and shoves her in."

I confess I felt, as I saw the *Britannic* take the water, that the omission of any religious ceremony smacked unnecessarily of defiance of the old dependence on Providence of those who go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters. Seamen are, I find, almost invariably men with a simple religious faith, conscious that their ways are overruled by the Divinity that shapes our ends. They may not, like so many soldiers, be sternly orthodox in their religious views—I think military men worry themselves more over Daniel and the mystic numerals in Revelation than any other class—but the sailorman is rarely agnostic, and seldom without a working religion of his own. If the crews of ocean liners were allowed a ballot on the point, I am confident an overwhelming majority would vote for ships to be launched with some religious ceremonial.

Generally speaking, the big sensations that one expects to thrill are disappointing. Oscar Wilde told the New York reporters who interviewed him on the liner that he had been disappointed in the Atlantic Ocean. That was the hyperbole of a *poseur*, of course, but I confess that my first impressions of Niagara fell far below my own anticipations. A second and third visit wiped out my initial disappointment, it is true. Again, shooting the Lachine Rapids on the St. Lawrence struck me as miserably tame, nor was my first journey on a mountain railway

in the Alps half so breathless as I had expected. Seeing my first iceberg—there were eleven of them as we emerged after three days in a fog off the Banks of Newfoundland in 1894—was an uncanny experience without a redeeming touch of poetry. The midnight sun in Norway is a bit of a bore, and the aurora borealis off Labrador is not so impressive as a summer fire on a hillside common in England. The really unforgettable thrills are the first glimpse of one's first baby, the first kindly review of one's first book, holing a very long putt on a golf green, digging the very first potatoes one has ever grown—all simple, homely, commonplace episodes in life, but all, somehow, tinged with sacramental felicity.

Whenever Sir Henry Irving started for one of his provincial tours he always played for a week at the Grand Theatre at Islington. On the last night of one of these short sojourns at Islington—I think it was in 1890—I was sent to report Irving's speech on his recall before the curtain. Mr. Bram Stoker, who was Irving's manager, made me welcome when I had presented a letter of introduction, and after the speech he took me to the great Shakespearean actor's dressing-room. Irving, it seemed, preferred to have his speeches printed as he had written them rather than as he had spoken them. It had been a speech with an autobiographical flavour, recalling how as a lad he had fought his way into Sadlers Wells Theatre to see Samuel Phelps play Shakespeare. From Phelps he had (he said) caught his enthusiasm for Shakespeare. Irving was extremely gracious to me, and gave me his manuscript of the speech, adding : "You will send it me back."

"I hope you don't insist on that," I replied. "I should like to keep it among my treasures."

"As you will, as you will, my young friend," Irving answered in his stateliest manner. "You are welcome indeed to it if retaining it will give you any pleasure."



Very different was Dean Farrar's treatment about the same time of a young journalist I knew who asked leave to borrow his manuscript of a lecture on Browning. Dr. Farrar replied to the request with a haughty refusal. The journalist, who was a Scotch graduate and a choice literary spirit, was turning away when the Dean called him back. "If you want to verify the quotations from Browning that I made I will give you the references," he said. "Thank you, but I need not trouble you," answered the journalist. "I think I can recite the poems you read."

Generally preachers and speakers are quite willing to lend journalists their notes after a speech. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain always passed down to the reporters' table any notes that he had used in a speech containing figures or quotations. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was always equally obliging. Mr. Lloyd George, who knows the value of publicity, is ever ready to help journalists in their duties. Mr. Asquith, who has never courted the Press, is considerate to journalists when they ask for consideration.

It is a common complaint with journalists that they get less help at religious meetings than at secular gatherings. The complaint is not always justified, I think. The Church Congress is certainly a notable exception. There a press secretary makes things easy for the journalists, and usually has advance copies of papers and addresses to distribute among the reporters. The Baptist Union, under Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, removes all unnecessary difficulties for pressmen. But, as a rule, promoters of religious meetings do leave journalists to fend for themselves. And to some degree these assemblies suffer from the neglect. The Roman Catholic Church, whose propaganda is sleepless, is far too wide awake to neglect the Press. This fact—and not the suspicion so often voiced that there are Roman Catholics on the staffs of the newspapers—explains the publicity Roman Catholicism secures. If a prominent Roman Catholic says something in his sermon on a Sunday



that he wants published he sees that a paragraph report is in the newspaper offices early on Sunday evening, ready for the sub-editors to handle as soon as they come on duty. The possibilities of publication are thus vastly enhanced. If Anglicans and Free Churchmen always took the same care to meet the necessities of the newspapers they would have less ground for complaint. Now after sedulously neglecting the Press for many years the churches are discovering the value of press propaganda. The missionary societies led the way, and have set up a Co-operative Press Bureau. The Church of England has appointed a whole-time publicity agent to feed the Press. But most Free Church secretaries give journalists very little encouragement. One of them told me once that he held the whole Press in supreme contempt. He has certainly not made much use of it—or it of him.

The modern craving for publicity is calculated to make an ordinary journalist an incorrigible cynic. Nor is the man engaged in religious journalism immune. I have known preachers prepared almost to sell their souls for a paragraph. One, I remember, never preached away from his own church without sending a paragraph in his own handwriting (but accompanied by someone else's card) to the religious papers, and the paragraph invariably dwelt on his eloquence, the overwhelming size of the congregation, and the generosity of the collection. Needless to say, the paragraphs went promptly into the waste-paper basket; but still they came. On one occasion a well-known preacher, whom one might have imagined was far beyond such puerile vanities, sought me out after he had made a great speech on a great occasion, and said: "If you don't give me a good show in the *Christian World* for this speech I'll never speak to you again." And he has not.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### "THE PROCESS OF THE SUNS "

"GET rid of the miracles and the whole world," said Rousseau, "will fall at the feet of Jesus Christ." During my thirty years in religious journalism I have been watching the process of eliminating the miraculous from Christianity; but who would say that the world has fallen, or is falling at the feet of Jesus Christ? In my early years it was the common argument that the miracles proved the Divinity of Jesus; then the ground was shifted and it was argued that the Divinity of Jesus made the miracles credible. The pendulum has swung past both arguments, with, at least, a large modern school of Christian theologians, and it is now argued, not as Huxley said, that miracles do not happen, but that they may happen, and that the power of such a Personality of Jesus might account for triumphs of mind over matter so supernatural to all appearances as to be miraculous. Again, it is becoming increasingly recognized that the miracles of Jesus—the healing miracles are not put in this category, since psycho-therapists, during the war, performed feats of healing by the power of suggestion on a plane with some of the healing miracles of Jesus—must stand the test of the credibility of the records in the gospel. Very few of the broad Evangelicals to-day take the birth stories of St. Luke literally. They put them in the category of sublimatory poetry. Nor do they attach the old significance to the miracles recorded in St. John. I have heard even so orthodox a preacher as Dr. Charles Brown, ex-president of the Baptist Union, admit that Jesus was not



omniscient because it is recorded that "He was astonished." And Dr. Forsyth in his Congregational lecture on the Person of Christ treated both the Virgin Birth and the Physical Resurrection of Jesus as open questions. During the last thirty years orthodox theological opinion has abandoned the old tenacity of conviction concerning the miracles. But Rousseau's prophecy that "all the world will fall at the feet of Jesus" stands unfulfilled.

A Rousseau writing to-day would probably say: "Get rid of the dogmas saddled upon Christianity by St. Paul and all the world will fall at the feet of Jesus." The Pauline dogmas of the historic fall, the total depravity of man, the transactional atonement by the death on the cross changing God's mind towards man, and salvation by faith have, by no means, the hold they had twenty years ago. What have been called "Synoptic Gospel Christians" are multiplying in the Free Churches, especially among the younger men. They stand by the gospel as Jesus taught it according to the records of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and they decline to be bound by dogmas to which Jesus gave no authority. They insist that the teaching of the Founder is the supreme test of what is essentially Christian, and that Christianity is learning the mind and catching the spirit of Jesus.

The rumblings of a fierce Congregational controversy that arose forty years ago as a consequence of what was called the Leicester controversy were still to be heard when I became associated with religious journalism. That controversy swirled round a demand by some of the younger Congregational ministers—among them Mr. Allenson Picton, Dr. P. T. Forsyth, and Dr. John Hunter—that miracles should be treated as open questions. These pioneers were suspect for many years, and so strong was the denominational antagonism to such latitudinarian views that more than one of the Leicester group suffered ostracism from Congregational pulpits. But the echoes of that



fierce controversy have now died down. In some measure the down-grade controversy which rent the Baptist denomination in twain and threw Dr. John Clifford and Mr. Spurgeon into hostile camps in the late 'eighties was a repercussion of the Leicester controversy coupled with fear of the results of the Higher Critical study of the Scripture. That battle has also been fought, and the very name “Higher Criticism,” which at one time struck terror in the hearts of the faithful, has almost lost its power to terrify, especially since it is growingly recognized that the moral and spiritual power of the Bible is reinforced when it is freed from the burden of patches of questionable morality and doubtful historicity.

Biblical criticism and the historical method of study were causing marked shiftings of emphasis in theology before the war but the war broke through many theological entrenchments. The need for the restatement of a doctrine of Providence is one of the war's legacies.

The complaint is becoming common—especially from the governing boards of theological colleges—that candidates for the Free Church ministry come in such overwhelming proportions from humble homes. It is true that while a few ministerial candidates are sons of middle-class people and a certain quota are sons of ministers (though it is seldom that the son of a conspicuously successful minister chooses to follow his father's calling or even identify himself very conspicuously with church life), the great majority of preachers are sons of the people. But it has always been so, and I imagine it always will be so. Spiritual genius, or a passion for promoting the Kingdom of God, seldom emerges out of affluence. When Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven and of the traffic of the angels thereon, his head was resting on a stone pillow. And it is eternally true that the soft-pillowed life of luxurious homes rarely produces great

preachers. Rev. C. H. Spurgeon was the son of a small farmer; Dr. Parker's early home life was almost squalid; Dr. Clifford began work as a lace-piecer at the age of nine; Dr. Orchard spent his childhood in East London and got his elementary education in a Whitechapel Board School; Dr. John A. Hutton, the most popular Scottish preacher to-day, was reared in a small shop; and Gipsy Smith in a travelling caravan. Dr. J. H. Jowett has said, publicly, that he was born and brought up in a humble home in Halifax—in a street in which not a flower, not even a blade of grass was to be seen. Rev. W. H. Armstrong, minister of City Road Chapel, the citadel of Methodism, was a newsboy. All these men were sleeping on hard pillows when the dreams of heavenly traffic came to them, and, firing their souls with visionary power, made of them the stuff that great preachers emerge from.

I think it is this belief that the soft pillow destroys moral and spiritual fibre that makes the Free Churches suspicious when a preacher is known to be eager to make money, and contemptuous when a preacher dies rich. The idea that men should make a commercial success of Christian ministry is abhorred. Von Harnack has a passage on this point in his "What is Christianity?" which expresses the mind of Free Churchmen on prosperous preachers.

Preaching takes a place of importance in the Free Churches that Anglicans often wholly misunderstand. It is an ingrained belief in the Free Churches that Christianity has always, from the days of the primitive Church, been propagated by the preaching of the Gospel, and that whenever preaching has been neglected, or belittled, Christianity has lost its hold on mankind and its vital force in the world. Such a conviction necessarily leads to emphasis—sometimes over-emphasis being placed upon preaching power in a minister. Save only character, nothing weighs so heavily in the selection of students for ministerial training



in the Free Church. Candidates for colleges must give evidence that they have felt a Divine call to the ministry of the Gospel; and the urge to preach, and preach effectively, is regarded as a collateral proof of the inward “call.” The casual way in which younger sons of great families often go automatically into the Anglican Church, and the idea of the priesthood being regarded as a profession into which a man may enter for a career as he would enter the law or medicine, is unthinkable to Nonconformists. As a result, the general level of preaching in the Free Churches is, I think it will be admitted, higher than in the Episcopal Church. Indeed, one obstacle to the proposed interchange of pulpits by Anglicans and Free Churchmen is that Free Church congregations would be restive under the preaching of the average Anglican clergyman. It sounds uncharitable, but some truth lies behind it. My own experience as a fairly frequent worshipper in Episcopal churches goes to confirm it. The different emphasis put upon the place of the sermon in worship accounts for the disparity.

Within recent years there has been a very notable cross-current of tendency between the Free and the Episcopal Churches in the matter of liturgy. Among Free Churchmen there is a growing feeling in favour of liturgical services—or at least a larger element of liturgical form in worship. Synchronously there has been a disposition on the part of many Anglicans to crave for—and as far as it is legally possible to adopt—an element of free prayer in their services. On the one side there is a desire to seek that which the other seems anxious to discard. The fact that the Congregational Union has prepared and published a volume of liturgical services is evidence of a tremendous revolution of feeling since the two historical Nonconformist Churches—Baptist and Congregational—came into existence in the great protest against uniformity in 1662. It is one of time’s deferred revenges that this spirit of



reciprocal compromise should now manifest itself among Conformists and Nonconformists.

The great Victorian leaders of Nonconformity would, I imagine, have viewed this change of attitude towards liturgy with misgiving. They stressed the prophetic aspect of the pulpit. Dr. Dale believed that free prayer is the essence and germ of Free Church worship. While he welcomed changes in Nonconformity that came as concessions to the growth of culture and artistic sensibility, he did so only as long as the changes did not destroy or weaken the old purity and simplicity of the Free Church spiritual witness. Dr. Dale used to tell in this connexion the story of a Saracen king who had led his army to victory so often that his flag was covered with trophies won from defeated enemies. Once, however, the always-victorious army met its equal, and the battle swayed till the issue seemed in doubt. Then the Saracen king called to his standard bearer : "Tear down the trophies ; let the soldiers see the old bare flag." At the sight of the flag bared of its embellishments the king's men-at-arms leapt into the fight with a fury that could not be withstood and swept the enemy from the field of battle. I have an idea that Dr. Dale, were he alive to-day, would be telling that story still. He would have felt, as Dr. Lynn Harold Hough has said, that there is something almost disconcerting in the thought of Congregationalism speaking to the spirit through the senses.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### A PRE-RAPHAELITE EVANGELICAL

**A** SADLY unappreciated treasure of London is the Chapel of the Ascension which Mrs. Russell Gurney erected as a sanctuary for rest and silence and prayer, and inward communion with the enduring, unseen realities. Frederic Shields, one of the Pre-Raphaelites, decorated all four walls of the little chapel with paintings intended to be a complete exposition of the Bible from the standpoint of an artist "walking in his art by the broad law of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As the decorative scheme was nearing its completion I asked Mr. Shields' permission to visit the chapel, which stands back from the Bayswater Road, near the Marble Arch, and write an article about his work. After one rather curt refusal he relented, and not only gave me access to the chapel but offered to devote a day to explaining the pictures and the purposes behind them. That day was a delightful and memorable experience. Mr. Shields, who was over seventy, was a frail little man with bright eyes into which a sweet sadness crept as he talked. He was intensely proud of the chapel. "I've not tried to do a sonnet," he told me. "I've tried to paint an epic." He spared himself no pains to expound his work, and with infinite patience explained the elusive meanings hidden behind the elaborate, and, to my mind, rather niggling, symbolism on the panels between the larger pictures. Particularly was he anxious to show me that he had painted upon the chapel walls the whole story of Biblical revelation, not as it had been done in Italy from a Roman

Catholic standpoint, but in the spirit of English Evangelicalism.

He was bitterly disappointed (he told me in a letter) that the religious press had utterly ignored the existence of the chapel, because he felt sure that any notice commending the spirit evidenced on its walls would bring it before multitudes of Christian people who would gladly be directed to it. Even yet I think the remarkable little chapel is very little known. Only one person in ten to whom I have mentioned it has ever heard of the place. Even Americans visiting London seem to omit it from their "schedule."

Mr. Shields, I gathered, had originally been a Baptist, but had later in life associated himself with the Plymouth Brethren. Concerning the plenary inspiration of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, he had not a possible probable shadow of a doubt. I thought when he led me eagerly across the chapel to draw my special attention to his picture of the great fish that swallowed Jonah that our talk would come to an abrupt end. As we stood before the picture he said sharply :

"You are a Christian, aren't you?"

"I hope so," I replied; "at least I try to be."

"Then, of course, you believe that the great fish did swallow Jonah," he added confidently.

"I should not like to say," I answered, "that I interpret it as a literal fact."

Mr. Shields was visibly shocked.

"Oh," he said sadly, "I'm sorry, very sorry, because I don't think any man can be a Christian unless he believes that Jonah was swallowed by the great fish. To me it is a prophecy of Christ's resurrection after three days in the tomb."

I felt sure Mr. Shields was repenting his offer to show me his pictures, and I quite expected him to give me a prompt dismissal. That he did not I attribute to the



charity that overcame his sense of my total unworthiness to understand his paintings. After a chilly interlude he became quite gracious again, and chatted freely about his association with the Pre-Raphaelites. Only in a reference to Rossetti did any suggestion of unkindness creep into his recollections—which, of course, were not intended for publication. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he said, was a man with a coarse, sensual mind.

Mr. Shields was a Puritan to the core. He had had a strange, and, I fancy, chequered life, and some of his ways were queer. I learned afterwards that he had married an artist's model out of pity and not for love. On the morning of his marriage he went off alone for his honeymoon, and for a long time he had not lived with his wife—not for any fault of hers, but just because, like Caliban's Setebos, it pleased him to do so.

From our conversation I was led to assume that he meant to retire when the Chapel of the Ascension was completed, and I mentioned this conclusion in my article. Mr. Shields, though he said he had nothing but admiration for everything else that I had written about the chapel, was irate over the suggestion that his art career was nearing its end. He wrote complaining that people would think he was effete, and he was fearful lest it might have injurious consequences to his future art life and means. I made the correction, with apologies. Not long afterwards the old artist died. The Chapel of the Ascension was his last and greatest work. As soon as he was dead the trustees of the Chapel of the Ascension had the building licensed for public worship, and Anglican services are now held there. This had been a bone of contention in Mr. Shields's lifetime. He was vehement in his opposition to any ordered services being held within its walls, and, being of a somewhat litigious disposition, he would probably have contested the right of the trustees to put the chapel to that use. I believe the trustees de-

ferred to the old artist's wishes and took no steps to thwart his desires in his lifetime. It seems certain that Mrs. Russell Gurney, the donor, had contemplated the use of the chapel for public worship, as she left directions in her will that certain holy vessels she possessed should be placed on the altar in the chapel.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### DR. FAIRBAIRN AND OTHERS

**D**R. ANDREW FAIRBAIRN, who as first Principal of Mansfield College carried Nonconformity into the very heart of the Anglican citadel of Oxford, and was one of the greatest scholars the Free Churches have given the world, had a brother who was a popular Scottish evangelist; and their mother always thought the evangelist was the greater man. Dr. Fairbairn's learning was prodigious. His power of synthesis was extraordinary; and his massive lectures on history had a Carlylean sweep. I doubt if his books are read much to-day. I asked one of his old students once if he thought Dr. Fairbairn was living in his books. He told me that whenever he went into an old Mansfield man's library and took down Fairbairn's books, he generally found the historical introductions thumb-marked, as if they were well read, but when he turned to the pages that contain Dr. Fairbairn's own original contribution to the subject the pages were seldom cut, and if cut looked quite clean. Dr. Fairbairn as a preacher and speaker required a solid hour at least. He would approach Milton, for example, by a comprehensive sweep over Greek thought, and lead up to Cromwell by a survey of the theory of government, starting with Plato's *Republic*. At the end of forty minutes he would amaze his hearers by hinting that he was now nearing the suburbs of his central subject. His oratory was magnificent. He could "splash at a ten league canvas with brushes of comet's hair," so opulent were his historical resources and so wide his horizons. I once saw him fail in ghastly fashion. He was preaching at



one of the Tuesday dinner-hour services for City men at Bishopsgate Chapel. The service begins at 1.15 and must end a few minutes before two o'clock so that the men can be back at their offices and warehouses punctually. Dr. Fairbairn, wholly unaccustomed to the tyranny of a clock, found himself with seventeen minutes for his sermon. Given seventy minutes he might do himself justice; but seventeen minutes! He gave us a sort of prelude to his introduction to a massive discourse; but he was desperately uncomfortable and quite ineffectual. As it was he went on till perilously near two o'clock, and might have even passed the hour, but one by one the City men "folded their tents like the Arabs and as silently stole away." Dr. Fairbairn accepted the closure.

Hearing Dr. Fairbairn and reading Macaulay were similar experiences. The Oxford Principal and the Whig historian shared a love of antithetical sentences. When once Dr. Fairbairn fell into antitheses the sonorous rhythms rolled from his lips like a Hebrew chant.

Old Mansfield students tell many good stories of the curious predicaments into which Dr. Fairbairn's rolling eloquence lured him and from which he escaped with glory. Once, so the story goes, he was addressing a mixed audience on the contrast between Aberdeen and Oxford Universities. He drew a vivid picture of the hardships of the Scottish undergrads at Aberdeen in his young days, spoke of their spartan oatmeal diet and their dreary bare lodgings. Against this austere background he painted a vivid word picture of the sybaritic luxuriousness of the Oxford undergraduate. "Look at him," he said, "as he sprawls in his sumptuously upholstered study chair, with his legs stretched across to another chair—a cushion under his head, another cushion under his feet and a third cushion under his—(then he remembered his mixed audience)—under his—his superincumbent mass." Everyone gasped; then they cheered at the clever recovery out of the rough.

A fine capacity for contemptuous frenzy was one of Dr. Fairbairn's characteristics. He exploded easily. Once when he was in Italy—with, I think, Mr. Joseph King—they visited the little chapel at Assisi, sacredly associated with St. Francis, and a monk gave Dr. Fairbairn a little printed prayer for the conversion of England. Dr. Fairbairn was wrath. "What Roman Catholic is there in England," he asked, "that an educated man could consult on any matter in theology or religion?" The suave priest mentioned the name of an ecclesiastic resident in Oxford. Dr. Fairbairn literally boiled over. "A perfectly illiterate person," he retorted in the broad Scotch that he forgot in his calmer moments. And he stamped out of the chapel in patent fury.

As Dr. Fairbairn grew older he became more and more diffuse in his style, and a speech or a sermon became a series of elaborate digressions from a main theme, of which his hearers caught only occasional glimpses. No wit, and very little humour—and that of a rather elephantine order—garnished Dr. Fairbairn's utterances. They were learned, solid and often magnificent—exhausting as well as exhaustive. After his visit to India Dr. Fairbairn's theology became somewhat ambiguous. Contact with the Oriental mind softened his dogmatism. He realized afresh that Christianity is an Oriental religion that has been squeezed into Occidental thought forms, and he believed that when the East had experienced Christianity it would send it back to the West enriched and deepened. Dr. Fairbairn, after his Indian tour, wrote and re-wrote five times a chapter on the Person of Christ which he included in his last book.

Perhaps Dr. Fairbairn's most historic utterance was his defiant "We will *not* submit," addressed to Lord (then Mr.) Balfour when leading a deputation of Free Churchmen to protest against the 1901 Education Act. That outburst from Dr. Fairbairn set the heather ablaze. It was

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the signal for the passive resistance campaign, when the most law-abiding section of the British people defied Parliament and disobeyed its statutes. Dr. Fairbairn, though the progenitor of passive resistance, did not himself passively resist. As he was not even a ratepayer—the taxes on the Principal's house at Mansfield College were paid by the college authorities—he could not participate actively in the revolt that he inaugurated.

Oxford did every honour to Dr. Fairbairn at his funeral. But the service in Mansfield College was icily correct. On the way back to London Mr. Basil Mathews, who was once Dr. Fairbairn's secretary, remarked that no one present at the funeral would have gathered that Dr. Fairbairn was a man of God. Yet that was, pre-eminently, what he was.

Now that the premier English universities, following the lead of the Scottish universities, have begun to confer their degrees of D.D. upon Free Church ministers who have attained eminence in theological scholarship, the temptation to accept degrees from doubtful universities in America is passing away. At one time the trade in transatlantic degrees was an open scandal. Degrees from Yale, Harvard, Princeton and Oberlin were, of course, beyond all cavil; but some of the mushroom universities in the United States literally hawked their D.D. degrees in this country. I knew one minister who got a D.D. for £5, and procured another for a friend at the same figure. Any backwoods college which secured a State charter as a university—and the charters were easily procured—had the legal right to confer honorary degrees; and some of these colleges—scarcely equal as educational institutions to any British polytechnic—found the fees paid by recipients of these degrees a useful source of income. The responsible American universities were disgusted at the traffic and did all they could to stop it. Now all our leading Free Church denominations have devised



machinery for testing the value of honorary degrees, and refuse to recognize any doubtful honours in their year-book lists of accredited ministers.

The scandal arising from the traffic in worthless degrees was effectually exposed through the *Christian World*, which was sued by a London evangelist for damages for libel—the alleged libel (of which I was the author) being in describing the institution which sold him his D.D. and S.T.D. as a “fake university.” The case, when it came before the King’s Bench Court, created a sensation. The evangelist, who caused much amusement by his weird pronunciation of the Latin in his diploma, shrivelled under cross-examination by Mr. H. F. (now Sir Henry Fielding) Dickens, K.C. The case was laughed out of court. On the second day the special jury intimated that they did not want to hear any more of the defendant’s case, and gave a verdict for the *Christian World*. For some years after that libel action doubtful American degrees were referred to me for investigation by one eminent Free Church secretary. The reports of the Commissioners of Education in the United States, sent to me from Washington, enabled me to assess, pretty accurately, the standard of any university from which doubtful degrees emanated; but I received valuable help from American university authorities who were as anxious to stamp out the trade in bogus degrees as anyone on this side of the Atlantic. I am afraid, however, that the traffic would revive if vigilance were relaxed.

Though I have not the exact figures, I believe I am right in saying that two out of every three of the D.D. degrees of London University (which is a doctorate won by presentation of a thesis by a graduate in theology) have been taken by Free Church ministers. This is an achievement of which the Free Churches have every reason to take pride.

Since Oxford University has taken to itself the right to confer its D.D. degree on Free Churchmen and has exer-

cised it in the case of Dr. W. B. Selbie, the learned Principal of Mansfield College, it will, one hopes, make the *amende honorable* to Dr. R. F. Horton. The furore which arose thirty odd years ago when Robert Forman Horton, one of the first Dissenters to be admitted to Oxford University after the abolition of the sectarian tests, was appointed Examiner in Theology and then deprived of that office is forgotten now. Dr. Horton needs no *imprimatur* from his own university upon his theological scholarship; but the degree of D.D. from Oxford would honour the university as much as the man. Dr. Horton is a son of whom his *alma mater* has reason to be proud. His career at the university ending in a Fellowship at New College was dazzling, and his distinguished work as preacher, teacher and writer has since carried his name to the ends of the earth.

The late Dr. John Hunter was as shy as a mouse; but he was as bold as a lion in the pulpit. The contrast between Dr. Hunter in and Dr. Hunter out of the pulpit was almost incredibly vivid. When he began to preach it seemed as if a new personality invaded him. His voice, manner, even his appearance changed. No preacher of my acquaintance threw so much passion into his preaching, and I have seen him come out of the pulpit trembling and exhausted after the effort of preaching. Dr. Hunter was almost the last of the Independents. He was an ecclesiastical individualist to the finger-tips. In his young days he was a fervid evangelical; but in his later years his theology approximated to Unitarianism. When in Glasgow he withdrew from the Scottish Congregational Union, but when finally he came to London he would gladly have joined the Congregational Union of England and Wales. A technical difficulty arose because Dr. Hunter would not become a member of a London Congregational church to qualify for fellowship with the Union. "I shall never



again," he wrote to me, "ally myself with any church." He had reached the conclusion that Jesus never intended to found a church, but meant His followers to leaven human society, like the yeast in His parable. Still, Dr. Hunter was very sore that the rule of the Congregational Union was enforced against him, and that his name was not enrolled among the accredited ministers in the "Congregational Year-Book."

The sortie that Dr. Hunter made from Glasgow to London twenty years ago was one of his mistakes. He was deeply disappointed with his ministry at the King's Weigh House Chapel. Though he attracted a large following he never felt at home there, and just when he seemed to have success within his grasp, he suddenly retreated to Glasgow. But London had unsettled him, and his second term of ministry at Trinity Church did not repeat the glories of his first pastorate there. Dr. Hunter was happiest, and at his best too, when he was preaching in the Bechstein Hall and at University Hall, where he gathered people of his own genre drawn from all the churches and no churches—people who felt the need of a worshipful service without committing themselves beyond being "on the side of the angels." The institutional side of church life was uncongenial to Dr. Hunter. He was a preacher and only a preacher. His shyness made pastoral duties irksome to him. He paid a pastoral call in the mood of a mind of a man who goes to a dentist and discovers as soon as he has rung the bell that the need for the visit has quite vanished. Still, Dr. Hunter loved a gossip with a congenial spirit. He often dropped into my room in Fleet Street for a long talk, but I never succeeded in getting him to my club. He froze in unfamiliar company.



## CHAPTER XXX

### WAYS AND VAGARIES OF PREACHERS

AS long as preaching endures preachers will vary in their methods of preparation and in the extent to which they use manuscript in the pulpit. When Dr. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth, was a young minister in his first pastorate at Lincoln I was his guest for a week-end. Over the dinner-table he gently reproached his wife. "Do you know," he said, "that you put my evening sermon in my wallet this morning. If I had known it before I began preaching I should never have got through my sermon." Dr. Jones's habit was to write his sermons in full, carry the MS. with him into the pulpit, but never take the manuscript out of his pocket. Practically he memorized his sermons—a method that has nothing to be said for it except in condemnation of its needless strain upon mind and memory. Now Dr. Jones places his manuscript—written in a copper-plate hand, without an erasure or an emendation—on the open Bible, and with scarcely more than an occasional glance preaches with what seems to his hearers to be complete independence of script. He vows that he cannot make an impromptu speech or preach an extempore sermon.

Dr. J. H. Jowett writes out his sermons, works over them, interlining and embellishing, and by the time he comes to preach he is so familiar with his manuscript that he treats it as non-existent. In May, 1920, Dr. Jowett abandoned this habit of a lifetime and began preaching from skeleton notes which outlined his scheme of thought, but left the phrasing to the impulse of the moment. The

change brought a new element of spontaneity into Dr. Jowett's preaching but at the loss of the delicate nuances for which Dr. Jowett's admirers look, and after a very short experiment he reverted, reluctantly, to the manuscript habit. Dr. Parker pondered over his sermons in the quiet of his study, and took into the pulpit a few scrawled catch-words on a half-sheet of notepaper. Dr. Campbell Morgan relied on his amazing fluency for his form of expression, but he worked very hard at the framework of his expository sermons before preaching.

A note Dr. Orchard once sent me when I asked for the manuscript of a special sermon he had announced indicates his method of sermon-making. "I cannot," he wrote, "promise Sunday's sermon at this stage. It may turn out quite useless for printing. I do not pursue Dr. Jowett's method of starting on Tuesday to write. I think about my sermons a little only, read up anything that is necessary as soon as I know what I want to talk about, and then leave everything until the last day, when I just start and write right away. Of course, it means occasional mare's nests, and sometimes the very best comes only when one gets into the pulpit and practically abandons what one has written entirely and takes only a fragment of what one has prepared. The trouble is that then one really has no record, and what one tries to print afterwards is nothing like the thing delivered. But I suppose that this is as it should be. I will let you know after delivery whether I can let you have the MS. But I have three sermons a month being published now, and it nearly exhausts everything. I am sure I very rarely preach three times in a month anything worth remembering." Dr. Charles Brown writes his sermons in extenso, using both sides of the paper. Dr. Clifford has a full manuscript. Rev. Silvester Horne wrote both his sermons and his speeches. He even wrote his children's addresses. His successor at Kensington (Rev. Thomas Yates) says he



found quite a goodly little hoard of them between the pages of the pulpit Bible.

Over-preparation of sermons rather than under-preparation is the danger of the pulpit to-day. Manuscript may be a necessity or a crime, but generally it is a crime, and on the whole congregations are prepared to sacrifice something in literary finish and precision of phrasing if ministers will leave their sermon manuscripts in the vestry. On the other hand, congregations rightly resent a preacher neglecting the essential preparation of a sermon. This is always detected. At a ministers' conference in America one minister declared that he never prepared his sermons. He did not even select his text before going into the pulpit. He just picked out a verse from the Scripture lesson and announced that as his text, saying, "These words contain three profoundly important lessons for us, my friends." "Yes, and what do you do then?" asked an amazed ministerial brother. "Why, then I hustle round and find three."

All writers and speakers are, consciously or unconsciously, predatory in the matter of ideas, since everything that is worth thinking and saying has been thought and said long ago; but cases of flagrant plagiarism are singularly few. I remember only about five glaring instances. What is perhaps the most audacious plagiarism in recent times—the Fleming-Talmage episode—occurred just outside my period. Once I took part in exposing a plagiarist. But that episode has always been a painful memory—a haunting memory, in fact, since it broke a career and accelerated a death. The plagiarist in this case was a Congregational minister, a brilliant man for whom there was no excuse, except his indolence. Yet he had pilfered from other men's sermons for years. My attention was drawn to a series of sermons he was advertis-



ing on the moral teaching of Shakespeare. Examination of shorthand notes taken of the first discourse left no room for doubt that the preacher was appropriating not merely the ideas, but the *ipsissima verba* of another Congregational minister's book on that subject. I engaged a verbatim shorthand writer to report two more of the lectures, and then I sent the transcripts of the notes to the author from whom the preacher was borrowing in such a wholesale and barefaced fashion. The author addressed a letter to me, as editor of the *Independent and Nonconformist*, protesting against the outrage, and proving the plagiarism by columns of "deadly parallel." The preacher pleaded tricks of a retentive memory and unconscious appropriation; but the exposure split his church and shattered his influence. It was the beginning of the end of his career, which closed in shadow. I have never ventured since to expose a plagiarist.

A second case of plagiarism which caused me deep anxiety involved a very popular Welsh Congregational minister—a man whom I knew well and in whose home I had been a guest. I had just been reading, with interest, a volume of lectures by Dr. McCook, an American divine, on "Studies in Nature," when the monthly magazine of my Welsh Congregational minister friend came into my hands. Turning over its pages I noticed the curious verse he had used as the text of the sermon printed in the magazine. Glancing over the sermon I found that all the discourse was strangely familiar; then it flashed upon my mind that the sermon was pilfered from Dr. McCook. Close comparison disclosed the fact that the entire sermon was a deft amalgam of two lectures in "Studies in Nature." The discovery haunted me; but I did nothing. A few months later my ministerial friend sent me an agitated letter. He had, he said, been so unwell and worried during the previous week that he had got into arrears with his sermon preparation, till on Saturday night he found

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himself with only one sermon ready. In desperation, he said, he had done what he had never done before—appropriated one of another preacher's published sermons. A minister who had been present in his congregation had detected the plagiarism and might seek means to expose him. He begged that, if anything came to me as editor of the *Independent and Nonconformist*, I would, for friendship's sake, suppress it, and spare him the horror of exposure. I replied at once, promising that no such communication would be published; but I added an expression of regret that he had used another man's sermon, and also of sorrow that he should say that he had never done so before. I then drew his attention to the sermon he had published in his own magazine and to the appropriation from McCook's "Studies in Nature." By return I received a letter expressing gratitude for the "sharp reproof." I had pulled him up with a jerk, he said, and it would be a warning to the end of his life. I have no doubt that, when written, the letter was sincerely meant; but we never met again on the old terms. There was something of "doubt, hesitation and pain" on his side.

Once I heard an old minister who had retired from active pastoral work preach at a week-night service a sermon by Dr. Jowett, which had appeared in a religious paper published that very day. And I listened to a Welsh preacher giving a children's address which had appeared in a volume of children's sermons by another Welsh preacher. In both instances the plagiarism was flagrant and beyond all question. But the old minister was rendering a voluntary service to the church at short notice, and the other preacher was not seeking to make a reputation by children's addresses. So both offences might be put in the category of venial sins. My observation leads me to think that plagiarism in Free Church pulpits is now very rare.



## CHAPTER XXXI

### CHANCE MEETINGS

THE first time I saw General Booth was at the funeral of Mrs. Booth, the Mother of the Army. He was standing in an open carriage in the cortège as it crossed London, waving his cap to the crowd. The gesture was characteristic of his natural unconventionality. In later years I knew him fairly well, and saw him frequently. More than once I interviewed him, and on one of his motor tours I rode with him for some hours in his famous white car. His delight in the interest taken in him by the people of the countryside was almost pathetic. "Wonderful," he would say, "and not organized at all," as he pointed to the groups of villagers clustered at cross-roads. His temper was irascible and his patience short, but his heart was as big as a house. He was criticized for the arbitrary rule that prevailed in the Salvation Army, but he defended it with sound logic. The people drawn into the Salvation Army, he argued, were people who needed discipline and had made a mess of life, many of them, from want of self-discipline. They needed direction and authority from others, just as much as raw recruits in the national army. The General ruled his staff with an iron hand—he also led his flock like a shepherd; still, some of the stern rules of the Army were not of his making. He told me, for example, that the edict against smoking in the Salvation Army was self-imposed by the rank and file. It was their own wish, not the General's command.

I wrote a good many articles about the Salvation Army's social work, especially its Labour Colony at



Hadleigh and Mrs. Bramwell Booth's work among fallen women and for little children. Business brains are always put into the Army's operations, and I have never felt the least hesitation in saying that the Army gives a sovereign's worth of value for every pound subscribed to it. Sir Abe Bailey, the South African gold magnate, holds this view strongly, and used at one time to call himself "a cheque-book Salvationist." Once when he had invited General Booth and Colonel Kitching to lunch at a leading club in Johannesburg, their table was conspicuously placed in the centre of the fashionable dining-room and a source of interest to other guests in the hotel. Before beginning lunch Sir Abe turned to General Booth and said: "I know you like to say grace; will you say it now?" So the old General stood up and asked a blessing over the meal.

The smartest thing I ever heard the dear old General say was a retort upon a critic who expressed astonishment that the Salvation Army accepted money from a bookmaker (Mr. Herring). "I call it nonsense," he said, "to talk of dirty money. I clean it by the good use I make of it. If Mr. Herring, who makes his money by betting, likes to give me some of his winnings, I will spend it on giving some of his victims another chance to be honest men."

I saw a good deal of Mr. Booker Washington when he was visiting England. The leader of the negroes in the United States and the author of "Up from Slavery" had a clever way of dealing with interviewers. I watched him one Sunday afternoon at the Hotel Cecil withstanding the combined attacks of seventeen interviewers. He received them all at once in his bedroom. They sat on his bed, squatted on the floor, stood by the mantelpiece, and, indeed, occupied every scrap of standing or sitting room that was available. Mr. Washington drew all their fire. His adroitness came out not so much in what he actually said, but in what he avoided saying, and in the skill with

which he dodged committing himself to anything beyond generalities. He gave nothing away, and not an indiscretion fell from his lips. Not a word would he say about lynching, nor could he be induced to protest ever so mildly against "Jim Crow" cars, and all the other little differentiations that the Southern whites make against the coloured man. His policy for the negro was not to fight for rights, but to win them. Let the negro show that he could be a good citizen, an honest workman, a capable clerk, and then the colour prejudice would come to a natural end. This was his long view and patient aim. He agreed that in some respects the negro in slavery was better off than the negro freed but not free. Having been a slave himself, however, he appreciated the boon of freedom of soul.

I lunched with Mr. Booker Washington as the guest of Mr. John H. Harris, of the Aborigines Protection Society, and had an opportunity during a full afternoon's conversation to measure the lofty stature of the man. He sent me his Tuskegee College journal for some years afterwards, and my appreciation of his sterling qualities and his great gift of leadership was intensified by reading what he wrote. Now the American negro has found quite another type of leader in Mr. W. E. B. Du Bois, who stands for a wholly different policy. His battle-cry for the negro is defiant and bellicose. Glory in your black skins, he cries. The coloured people have a great heritage and a greater future. Mr. Du Bois tells the negro that Jesus Christ was not a white man—that he had a dark skin, in fact—and he reminds the American coloured race that the yellow Chinese people complain of the unpleasant odour of the white races. This is carrying the war into the enemy's camp with a vengeance. Indeed, Mr. Du Bois aims at federating the coloured people in the world for a revolt against white domination and a trial of strength if need be with the whites. When I was in the United States in 1920 I found some Americans distinctly apprehensive about



the temper of the American negro. The coloured question is the Irish problem of the United States.

Just before the war I met, at a Laymen's Missionary Conference at Buxton, a very remarkable Indian, Prof. Raju, who was studying at Oxford, and, *inter alia*, seeking to decide while in England the branch of the Christian Church to which he should attach himself. He had become a Christian under Methodist influence, but his quest for authority was driving him in the direction of Anglicanism or Catholicism. In India, where he had been a professor at Agra University, he was acclaimed as the possessor of the finest philosophical mind in the East. He was young, ardent, devout and extremely eloquent. I was especially interested in an argument he advanced that Asiatic history is divisible into two parts: (1) from the beginning of things up to the year 1905, and (2) from 1905 onwards. The year 1905 was, he argued, a dividing line in time for Oriental peoples, because in that year the Japanese defeated the Russians. He told me that the news that a white race had been overcome in battle by a yellow race (at the fall of Port Arthur) flashed through Asia by that strange telephony which sends news vast distances in the East with the rapidity almost exceeding that of the telegraph itself. Within twenty-four hours of the fall of Port Arthur on January 2, 1905, the tidings of that event had come across the Himalayas into India and was being discussed in the native bazaars at Agra. From that moment, said Professor Raju, every Asiatic dated the birth of a new hope, and Indian nationalism had a resurgence of courage.

Why is it that humorists are so frequently solemn men in private? One of the gravest men that I ever met was Max Adeler, the American humorist. He wrote "Out of the Hurly-burly" and "Elbow Room," both of them exceedingly droll books. In private life Max Adeler was



Mr. C. Heber Clarke, editor of a hardware paper at Philadelphia, but interested above all things in evangelical religion and Napoleon Bonaparte. He was a very solemn person indeed. I met him two or three times when he was visiting England as the guest of Mr. James Bowden, and if I had not known that he was the author of side-splitting humorous books I should have thought him incapable of a joke. He took life very seriously, but his zest for anything in the way of a relic or of a book about Napoleon was almost humorous. It was so schoolboyish in its wholeheartedness. I told him of a near neighbour of mine—to whom Dr. Holland Rose had introduced me—Miss Lowe, a daughter of Sir Hudson Lowe, who was Governor of St. Helena during Napoleon's captivity. Miss Lowe had reached the age of 84 without having been photographed, so one day I got my camera and took two photographs of her. Neither turned out well—the lighting difficulties in her room were too severe for an amateur to overcome—but she was very excited over the prints, and thought them very wonderful. Max Adeler was almost as excited as Miss Lowe herself when I told him about her and sent him one of the photographs. Possession of the picture of a lady, then alive, who had been in St. Helena along with Napoleon, was a real source of joy to him.

When I first met Mr. Jerome K. Jerome his gravity also struck me. But Mr. Jerome long ago passed through his humorous phase. He is now a humanitarian who uses both the stage and the novel as a pulpit. His father was a Baptist minister, and he was brought up in evangelical traditions, from which, however, he broke away. I heard him say that reading Ernest Renan's "Life of Jesus" changed all his thinking, and sent him back to Jesus as ethical teacher. Mr. Jerome put his own religion into *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, in which Jesus appears in the guise of "the stranger" who brings out

everybody's good qualities by taking them at their best. That play, Mr. Jerome told me, had to wait five years for its production. He felt that there were only two actors on the English stage to whom he would care to entrust the personation of the stranger—Mr. J. Forbes-Robertson and Mr. Martin Harvey. Both read the play and liked it, but had other commitments. Mr. Forbes-Robertson—he is now Sir Johnstone, of course—unexpectedly found himself with an unexpired period of the lease of a Strand theatre at the end of the run of a play. *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* was put on with the idea that it might just run three weeks. As a matter of fact, it ran for about three years, and ran in America, in fact, everywhere that the English language is spoken. Mr. Jerome's humanitarianism is his religion—that and his kindling faith in the good that is in the worst of men. Like John Greenleaf Whittier, he feels that

*Heart of Walter*  
| To worship rightly is to love each other,  
| Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### JOURNALISTIC CONFRÈRES

IF it be true that "interests pass into character," it is equally true that the loss of interests is as fatal as a disease. The late Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes, M.P., wrote his *Sub Rosa* article in the *Morning Leader* and the *Daily News* for so long that that daily column became the supreme interest of his life. When the *Daily News* dropped the "*Sub Rosa*" feature, Leigh Hughes was lost. The bottom seemed to fall out of all things for him. His sunny nature, too, was soured, and he nursed his grievance, talked about it, wriggled oblique references to it into nearly everything he wrote—even dragged it into his speeches in the House of Commons. In a way the loss of that daily task, which had become the habit of his life and the pivot of his day's round, became an obsession. It dislocated the machinery of his being. Life dealt other smashing blows at him. He lost his son and his wife in swift succession—and the heavens seemed as brass to this man whose function it had been to provide a daily stream of merriment. Acidity crept into his humour which had never before been more than just vinegarish in flavour.

Though Leigh Hughes's reputation rested upon his humorous writing, he prided himself on his serious work, and took especial pains over the Parliamentary sketch which he wrote for nearly twenty years for the *Christian World*. It was a relief to him not to be expected to be funny in that column, though his humour would creep out at times even there. I always thought Spencer Leigh Hughes was greater as an after-dinner speaker than as a



writer—humorous or serious. His verbal readiness was phenomenal, and his whimsicalities were quite unforced. One of his happiest *mots* was uttered at a Holborn Restaurant dinner. In the adjoining room a group of Scots were dining—it was a “Burns night”—and as Hughes was proposing a toast in one room a bagpiper began skirling in the other. Hughes paused, waited for a lull, and then dryly remarked: “Now that the rival wind-bag in the next room has finished I will proceed.”

I am not sure that Leigh Hughes cared much for his reputation as an after-dinner speaker. He seemed to think it ranked him with professional popular entertainers. Mr. Chauncey Depew, famous all over America for his post-prandial oratory, has a somewhat similar feeling. Mr. Depew used to tell a story of being at a dinner in Chicago when the mayor, who was presiding, said, in introducing Mr. Chauncey Depew, that he was like an automatic machine. “You put in a dinner, and up comes a speech.” The vulgarism exasperated Mr. Depew. On rising to speak, he quietly observed that he did not want to discuss the mayor’s analogy, but he did want to point out the difference between his after-dinner speaking and the chairman’s, since, in the case of the mayor, “he puts in a speech, and up comes your dinner.”

With the war, and the crash in the fortunes of the Liberal party, Spencer Leigh Hughes lost his vital interest in politics. He stuck to the House of Commons because he would have felt forlorn if he were not breathing its atmosphere. The 1918 General Election found him quite unconcerned as to whether he stood as an Independent Liberal or a Coalitionist. He left it to his Stockport constituents to decide, and they settled it for him—he took the “coupon” and was left unopposed. I saw him on that December evening when the Election results were being announced at the National Liberal Club. He was totally unconcerned as news came of old Liberal comrades falling

out in every quarter. "I'm in," he said, "and it's all I care for. There is no reality in English politics now." I never saw him again.

For twenty-one years I have sat in the same room in Fleet Street with Mr. Harry Jeffs, a journalist known to all Free Church ministers as an author, speaker, critic and Editor of the *Christian World Pulpit*. A better stable companion could not be desired. Mr. Jeffs learned his journalism in the leisurely old Bohemian days before office hours entered into the thoughts of Fleet Street men, and to change his habits with changing times has never occurred to him as a possibility. A prodigious worker, capable of bearing an extraordinary strain of work when the occasion demands—and it often does—he ambles at ordinary times in his own leisurely way through life. Self-taught, he reads Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, German, Italian and Spanish, and has been known to address German and French audiences in their own tongues. An omnivorous reader, especially of history, patristic literature and philosophy, to say nothing of all European fiction, he is a walking combination of "Bartlett's Quotations," "Haydn's Dictionary of Dates," "Lemprière's Classical Dictionary," and "Cruden's Concordance." But mathematics terrify him, and I suspect him of finding his digits very useful if he is confronted with a small sum in simple addition. Decimals are as baffling to him as they were to Lord Randolph Churchill. When Mr. Basil Mathews joined the *Christian World* staff he christened Mr. Jeffs "Yahweh"; but his familiars call him "'Enery," though he is a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and an ex-President of the International Brotherhood Council.

Stories of Mr. Harry Jeffs buzz round in Free Church circles. There are legends about his cigarette smoking, which is believed to be fabulously heavy because he scatters his cigarette-ash so prodigally over his own clothing.



When Mr. Jeffs went to Germany with Mr. Allen Baker's famous peace party—dubbed at the time "The Lager Hope party"—an English bishop asked in quiet amazement one evening how Mr. Jeffs managed to deposit tobacco ash not only on his waistcoat, but on the seat of his trousers. A witty colleague meeting Mr. Jeffs in black frock-coat well sprinkled with evidences of tobacco, quietly observed: "Ah, here comes Jeffs in his broadcloth and ashes." Mr. Jeffs has a delicate gift of humour himself. "We shall never," he said sententiously on one occasion, "restore the prayer meeting until we get rid of the first four prayers." "The Sunday School," he remarked on another occasion, "will always be handicapped until a Primary Department is established for superintendents in their dotage." I like best his remark to me one morning when he stopped me getting into an underground train which was already in motion: "No, don't do that, Porritt. I would sooner be *another* quarter of an hour late at the office any morning than a corpse for all time." To a friend who came to tell him that he was about to marry again—to a lady who was an old friend: "Well, at any rate," responded Jeffs, "I hope marriage won't interfere with your friendship."

Mr. Basil Mathews, who has since made a great reputation in religious circles as an author and editor, was for some years a colleague of mine in the *Christian World* office. It was a delightful association. Mr. Mathews is a blithe spirit with a well-developed sense of humour, and blessed with contagious enthusiasm. He came to Fleet Street direct from Oxford, with a good History Schools degree, an engaging personality and, that chief requisite for a journalist, a mind open to all the breezes that blow. Genius was written on his brow. Like Andrew Riach, in Sir James Barrie's first story, "Better Dead," he may have written it there himself, but it was there. He, too, had big ideas. Unlike Andrew (who "wanted to" start a new



*Spectator*, on the lines of the present one, but not so flippant and frivolous), Mr. Mathews first turned his eye on juvenile religious literature. "Give me your children," he said (as the Roman Catholic Church says), "let me say what they shall read, and I can trust you with them again when they are adults." What Basil Mathews hated was the sloshy sentimental religiosity that oozed out of pietistic books written for boys and girls. He set himself to produce something better—something that combined robust piety and vitalizing religion, something breathing the modern spirit of the Student Christian movement. Mr. Mathews found his *métier* at once, and the tide came up to meet him. Then the London Missionary Society tempted him away from Fleet Street, and he set up a new standard for missionary literature by the magazines and books he produced as that society's literary secretary. Now the Conference of British Missionary Societies (which has brought about unity of spirit and an amazing body of co-operative effort among all the missionary societies) has drawn Mr. Mathews into its service to create "*Outward Bound*," a magazine designed to interest the man in the street in international relationships in commercial, moral, literary and religious matters. "*Outward Bound*," which is really an organ of racial solidarity, is the first magazine in the production of which all the churches, Anglican and Free, have ever had a common interest, and, through their missionary societies, a joint liability.

Having cut a new furrow in literature, Basil Mathews found he possessed gifts as a platform speaker that soon set him in great demand all over the country. His manner is quite his own—we used, teasingly, to tell him it was "a quiet and ineffectual style"—but it is sufficiently distinctive to captivate people weary of rhetoric. Basil Mathews went out to Asia Minor to go over the footsteps of St. Paul on his missionary journeys and to seek local colour for his "*Paul the Dauntless*" (a missionary book which was not

merely written for, but bought by Public School boys). While he was away one of his former colleagues, a poetaster, prepared a collection of light verses to welcome the voyager home. They were audacious parodies of Francis Thompson, Blake, Browning, Masefield, Kit Marlowe and others. Inevitably they were given the title "A Pot of Basil." One parody suggested by Tennyson gave Mathews great joy :

Sankey, and one long prayer,  
And after that the plate;  
But may there be no maundering from the chair  
When I orate.

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For though behind the editorial "we"  
I veil my face so meek,  
I like the world to know that I am he  
When I get up to speak.

Only three copies of "A Pot of Basil"—and they were typewritten—ever saw the light, and even the author of the verses does not possess one.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### EVANGELISTS—GOOD AND BAD

**P**ROFESSIONAL evangelism almost received its death-blow, I think, by the Torrey-Alexander mission. We have had no serious attempt to revive that brass-bandy method of evangelism since that ghastly failure. I speak of it as a ghastly failure advisedly, because there was good reason to believe, after close investigation, that the Torrey-Alexander Albert Hall mission did practically nothing to strengthen the churches in London. Mr. Stephen Graham, writing on negro preaching, which is often corybantic, says that it is not a good thing for one's religion to be converted once a week. The Torrey-Alexander mission touched very few of the "uncovenanted"; it just titillated the jaded church-goers and gave them a fresh spasm of religious emotion. On the other hand, Dr. Torrey's appalling doctrine of hell and his catalogue of manufactured sins distressed the saner young ministers in the Free Churches, and created a revolt against professional evangelism.

"Billy" Sunday, a converted baseball player who took to the evangelistic platform, blazed in a bright white light in America for a time. Some efforts were made to get Mr. Sunday to undertake a campaign in England; but they fell through. One objection raised was that his picturesque baseball slang, which is part of his stock-in-trade, would be unintelligible in England. I used to read reports of his addresses in American papers, and though I claim to "speak American," "Billy" Sunday's vernacular left me guessing. One of his most memorable sayings was that



“there were fashionable women walking about New York who were not wearing enough clothes to make a pair of running pants for a humming bird.” But Mr. Sunday’s frank commercialism in evangelism would have been his undoing in England, even if his rampageous oratory had not revolted sensitive Christian people.

Not all the American evangelists that have visited England have failed to adorn their doctrine. Mr. D. L. Moody’s name is still fragrant amongst us, and the fruits of his work here are not all reaped yet. Happily we have been spared any visits from the type of American evangelist represented by Sam Jones, a professional revivalist who had a great vogue in the United States at one time. Sam Jones was as vulgar as Broadway at night. His manners were execrable and bad taste blazed from his lips. Once Sam Jones found himself engaged for a week’s mission in a Massachusetts city not far from Boston. On the Saturday night he waited upon the minister—a cultured young man, fresh from Yale and a gentleman to the finger-tips. Sam Jones inquired about the church and its members, found that they attended only one service a Sunday, did not send their children to Sunday school, showed no zeal for the prayer meeting, and would not turn out for a week-night service. Sam expressed his disgust. “Well,” he said, “if I had a church like this I guess I’d hire a yellow-dog to come and be sick over them.” “Exactly what I have done!” replied the young minister.

Some years ago a freakish American evangelist named Jack Cooke, who was advertised as the world’s greatest boy preacher, came to England and held evangelistic services in London and our great cities. Jack Cooke, who was about fifteen, had certainly an amazing flow of words. His glibness was uncanny. He would ask his audience to select him a text, and upon it he would extemporise for an

hour. I heard him three or four times and detected his trick. The text had no relation to the subject. After two or three minutes of quite commonplace exposition of the text—which any Sunday-school teacher might have equalled—he gramophoned a long discursive address which resolved itself into a fervid evangelistic appeal. But his success was sensational—especially in Birmingham, where about 2,500 people professed conversion under his influence. The promoters of the Jack Cooke mission asked for the use of Carrs Lane Chapel for a meeting of the converts. Dr. Jowett conceded it without hesitation. Each convert was asked to indicate on a card which Birmingham church he or she would like to be associated with. The vast majority elected to join Carrs Lane. Dr. Jowett, confronted with about 2,000 candidates for membership, met his deacons and earnestly begged them to face up to the responsibility. It was essential, he felt, that all the candidates should be visited and tested as to the sincerity of their desire for church membership. The task was tremendous, but it was undertaken. As a result of this winnowing by inquiry, about thirty of the converts were passed on to Dr. Jowett for final examination. The net result was that about seven were admitted to the fellowship of the church—a startling revelation of the value of sensational evangelistic methods.

The need for sane evangelism remains, but even more urgent is the necessity laid upon the churches to make themselves efficient as teaching institutions—as teachers of simple elemental Christianity. Three books, born of the war, proved the urgency of this consideration—Mr. Donald Hankey's "A Student in Arms," "The Church in the Furnace" by a group of Anglican chaplains, and Dr. D. S. Cairns's synthesis of the data gathered by the Y.M.C.A. and published under the title "Religion in the Army." All three books came from devoted churchmen and made



the same humiliating confession that the Church had utterly failed in her mission to give the young men of England any clear definite notion of what Christianity means. The soldier looked upon it all as "a ruck of obsolete theories and antiquated riddles." The majority of the soldiers in our armies had for long or short periods been scholars in the Sunday schools. Yet the net result of the teaching given there was a total ignorance of the elements of Christianity. Even more disturbing—at least to Anglicans who pin their faith to doctrinal teaching in the elementary schools—was that neither the provided schools nor the voluntary schools had made any lasting impression upon the soldiers' minds by the religious instruction given in the public elementary schools. The all-round failure of Church and school as teachers of Christianity was one of the revelations of the war. At the risk of appearing egotistical I must say that it came to me as no surprise at all.

During the seventeen years that I was superintendent of a Sunday school in South London—which was regarded by the Sunday School Union as a model of its kind—I made it a practice, Sunday by Sunday, to catechize every new scholar that came into the school. Those catechizings left some startling conclusions on my mind. I found, e.g., that in only a small proportion of working class homes do the parents even possess a Bible; that in an even smaller proportion do the parents even give their little ones the slightest religious teaching, and that in the vast majority of cases the children were not even taught to pray at their mothers' knees. Most of them had the vaguest notion as to when and where Jesus Christ lived and died. I seldom found a child knowing that the current year dated from the birth of Jesus. They knew the legend of the Shepherds, and in a blundering kind of way, if I asked why Jesus came into the world, they would reply, "To die for our sins." They could add nothing whatever to that bald



statement. They knew more about the miracles than they did about the parables; of the general teaching of Jesus upon life and conduct they were even more ignorant than about the parables. Time after time I was in despair over this appalling failure of home, day-school and church. At last I made it a principle of the school, and incessantly urged it upon my coadjutors, that whatever else might go untaught we should concentrate on the synoptic gospels, and strain every nerve to see that no scholar went through our school without having imprinted on his or her mind a clear outline of what Jesus was, what He did and what He taught. And I think that is the task the Church has to set before itself in this post-war age.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### MINISTERIAL HUMORISTS

THE idea that evangelists and preachers are dull dogs is quite erroneous. Dr. R. J. Campbell used to love telling "drunk" stories, and Dr. Campbell Morgan is a very lively travelling companion. His imitation of a Chinese idol, effected by contorting his very mobile face and hanging a small paper knife from his lips, is, I am told, a highly diverting trick. His stories used to keep D. L. Moody up late at night at Northfield. Dr. F. B. Meyer again, Puritan of Puritans, has a highly developed sense of humour, and on occasion can keep a company of friends in a very mirthful mood. I remember coming back from Birmingham by a late Saturday night train with Dr. Meyer, Mr. Silvester Horne, Rev. Thomas Law and Mr. Fred Horne.

We had been attending the foundation-stone laying of the Digbeth Institute, and we travelled as far as Rugby by a market train. Dr. Meyer was in a happy mood and had us in a continuous roar of laughter by recounting some of his odd travelling experiences. At Rugby we joined the London mail train, and the compartment coaches being crowded, the guard put us into the restaurant saloon. Dr. Meyer continued his racy reminiscences, and we were laughing heartily when the guard passed through the saloon. The restaurant conductor, who evidently resented our presence and had been reluctant to get us any coffee, stopped the guard to expostulate with him for having put us in the car. His tone was very contemptuous. Pointing to our group he told the guard :

"This won't do. You'd no right to put 'em in here. It's turning the car into a regular public-'ouse." No one enjoyed the joke better than Dr. Meyer.

Though very few professional evangelists have ever attracted me, I have a very tender feeling and a very high regard for Gipsy Smith. He is *sui generis* and a man of fine qualities of heart and spirit. His sincerity is beyond question, and he has none of that harsh censoriousness which always repels me in the ordinary type of evangelist. Gipsy Smith is a pure Romany. It explains the poetry that oozes from him. And he is proud of his vagrant ancestry. He recalls zestfully his boyhood days in a caravan—when he sold clothes-pegs from door to door in East Anglian villages—and takes as much pride in them as a blue-blooded aristocrat does his sixteen quarterings. He has built himself a home at Cherry Hinton just outside Cambridge, and from his dining-room window he can see the spot, across the fields, where his father's van used to be pitched.

Gipsy Smith at home is just as mesmeric a personality as Gipsy Smith addressing a big evangelistic meeting. A day I spent with him in his garden at Cherry Hinton comes freshly back to memory. All the birds knew him and had no sort of fear of him. He hooked a mother bird off her brood in a nest built in one of the rose-covered arches, and while Gipsy played with the fledglings the hen bird, quite unperturbed, sat on a bough a yard away. As we sat smoking—at least I was smoking; Gipsy Smith has no vices—Gipsy ejaculated, "Hallo, here's an old friend of mine come back." It was a chaffinch that had forsaken Gipsy's garden that year, but was paying a visit to old scenes. From his jacket pocket Gipsy produced a scrap of food, and in a minute or two the bird was perched on his wrist eating from his hand. With a low whistle Gipsy Smith drew the birds around him very



much like the old man who, before the war, used to feed the sparrows in the Tuileries gardens in Paris. And all the while he talked to them as St. Francis preached to the birds at Assisi.

For many years Gipsy Smith was the missionary of the National Free Church Council, which made all his engagements and took all responsibility for the finances of his missions—paying him a fixed salary. This was an excellent arrangement for the Free Church Council, and an especially good one for Gipsy Smith, who thus avoided all the suspicion of profiteering in the gospel which beslimes so much professional evangelism. Even his American evangelistic campaigns were under the ægis of the Free Church Council—a fact which takes out any sting that might have lurked in a good story of one of Gipsy's Atlantic voyages. Following his inveterate habit of taking any and every opportunity for "personal dealing" with anyone with whom he might be travelling, Gipsy talked to some of the ladies who were voyagers on the liner. None of them resented his earnest concern about their souls. He has "a way with him" which disarmed them. One of them, a well-known American vaudeville actress, asked a travelling companion of the evangelist who the dark gentleman with mesmeric eyes was. "That is Gipsy Smith, the famous evangelist," she was told. "Gipsy Smith!" replied the vaudeville actress. "Gipsy Smith. Oh, yes, I remember now. Of course! I followed him one week in Omaha. Say, he's a dandy artist. He hadn't left a dollar in the town."

One day Gipsy Smith was lunching at the National Liberal Club with a little group of friends, and was telling us some of his remarkable experiences at some mission he had been conducting in the Midlands. The late Rev. Thomas Law, the secretary of the National Free Church Council, was one of the party. So was Sir Henry Holloway and, I think, Rev. Silvester Horne. One of the old

waiters, a veteran who is forgiven many liberties, was serving at our table. On his way to the kitchen he passed another waiter; and in a far-travelling whisper remarked: "I've got a blooming Bible class at my table."

A very real and very delightful camaraderie exists among journalists, but I doubt if it equals in genuine good fellowship the freemasonry that marks the relationships of Free Church ministers. There are, a cynic has said, still three sexes—men, women and parsons. Circumstances have flung me among ministers for over twenty-five years and my parson friends are legion. I cherish these friendships because, with a few rare exceptions, I have found ministers to be men of warm sympathy, kind instincts and genuine brotherliness. Whether it is in the smoke-room or the golf links or on country walks, I find ministers the liveliest of companions, varied in their interests, keen in their enthusiasms and sincere in their attachments. In mufti the average parson is the very best of good fellows, delighting in healthy humour and clean mirth. Almost the happiest recollection of my travelling days is that of a ten-day voyage across the Atlantic with a party of fifty ministers *en route* to the International Congregational Council at Boston. The ocean journey was a sacrament of real fellowship, and at the end of the voyage a message was brought by one of the ship's officers that the other passengers wished the ministers to know that they had added to the gaiety of the trip by their good humour, good sportsmanship and good fellowship.

Though that voyage was made in midsummer the Atlantic was very unfriendly one day, and even the sturdy *Adriatic* pitched viciously in a rough sea. One of the stewards jokingly attributed the gale to the presence of so many parsons on board. Thereupon one of the ministers—I believe the wag was Rev. J. A. Patten, M.A., M.C., of Ipswich, who developed his sense of humour in the



trenches in Flanders—concocted a good story. A plot had been hatched—so the story went—among the crew and steerage passengers to break into the state-room of the greatest of all the preachers on board, and at dead of night conduct him to the top deck and thence cast him into the sea, as an encouragement to the others. That night—the story continued—the state-room door of every minister on the ship was found to be securely locked on the inside.

The Press Golfing Society came into existence through a match which I organized between journalistic golfers and Free Church ministers. It was played at Totteridge, and was a festival of high fun. As far as my recollection goes Lord Riddell—then Mr. George Riddell—played against Rev. Silvester Horne, Sir Emsley Carr against Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, and Mr. Lincoln Springfield of *London Opinion* against Dr. Griffith Jones. Altogether about twelve pairs were started off the first tee by Harry Vardon. The pressmen found the ministers both fine sporting golfers and very good fellows, and at the end of the day ministers and journalists agreed that they must make the match an annual event. The ministers already had a vagrant society of their own with a challenge cup for which they competed each year. This gave the journalists the germinal idea of founding a society of their own, and I found myself installed as first secretary. The Press v. Pulpit match went on uninterruptedly year by year until the war, and it has since been revived by Dr. Robert Donald.

The mingling of pressmen and ministers served the excellent purpose of bringing men of two professions, whose understanding is not very close, into intimate relationships. Each, I think, discovered unexpected qualities in the other through their friendly rivalry on the golf course.



One of the matches between Pulpit v. Press was arranged for a winter's day at the old Tooting Bec course. Three inches of snow had fallen during the night, but nine pairs of Spartans arrived with golf clubs and prepared to slog their way round the snow-bound course. Red balls were procured, and the match couples started in turn. Golf in deep snow is a slow and precarious pursuit, and only one pair managed to get round the whole eighteen holes. One player lost seven balls—it was the day of the ninepenny "gutty"—and the demand for new supplies of red balls overwhelmed the club professional. At one hole a ministerial golfer found himself—so it was said—in a deep-faced bunker over whose sandy floor three inches of snow was lying. He was just playing his seventeenth when his opponent gave up the hole. Even if the golf that day was beneath criticism, the journalists and the ministers all vowed that they had enjoyed it. I believe they had—if the laughter occasioned by the vicissitudes of the players was any criterion.

Nonconformity—even the Nonconformist ministry—has made larger contributions to English sport than it commonly gets credit for. Dr. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead, was a fine oarsman when he was at Oxford. He stroked the New College to the head of the river. Rev. R. J. Wells, the Secretary of the Congregational Union, excelled in both cricket and Rugby football. He played in the Hampshire cricket team for several seasons, and he represented England in Rugby football. Rev. Edward P. Powell, one of the Congregational Moderators, won his "blue" on the running path when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge. Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, Secretary of the Baptist Union, used to play a fine game at golf, though the best ministerial golfer of his time was Dr. D. L. Ritchie, Principal of Nottingham Congregational College, who was rated at "scratch," and for a time, I think, was

a "plus" man. Rev. F. W. J. Merlin, of Sutton Coldfield, is now, I imagine, the ministerial golfer with the lowest handicap. He is also, I think, the minister with the longest stream of university degrees after his name in the "Congregational Year Book."

The English pulpit lost one of its merriest souls when Rev. John McNeill finally went to America. His gaiety of spirit was infectious. He could no more keep humour out of his sermons than Dean Swift could keep dirt out of his love letters. In early manhood John McNeill had been a porter on a Scotch railway station. Perhaps it was there that he acquired his passion for a "crack." For a time John McNeill was a peregrinating evangelist, and the nomad habit became second nature to him. He was always on the move. I have lost all count of the pastorates he held.

Just as soon as he seemed to have settled in a church he left for another. Nothing would make him "stay put," as Americans say. Once when playing golf at Liverpool, his ball found a sand bunker with a face like a cliff. He got his niblick, played one, two, three, four, five shots, and the ball was still in the sandpit. Then he pulled out a handkerchief, wiped his brow, and, turning to his opponent, said: "Good, John McNeill's got a settled job at last."

- I think it was John McNeill who invented the story of Prof. James Stalker being met by a friend walking down a street in Aberdeen one morning during term. Dr. Stalker had just accepted a professorship at the Free Church College, then very short of students. "Now, who," cried his friend, "would have thought of meeting you here, Dr. Stalker, at this time of the day? I thought you would have been busy with your class."

"Yes," replied Dr. Stalker, "I should have been, but my class has got a gumboil."

The last time I heard of John McNeill he was making his way steadily—holding pastorates en route—from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific slopes of the United States. He may be on the return journey now. He always stays just long enough to leave the happiest of memories behind him. The call of something new is in his blood—it is a microbe, I imagine, that has not been isolated.



## CHAPTER XXXV

### RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

THE emergence of the woman preacher is an event of the last ten years, though Congregationalism had a woman pastor, Miss Hatty Baker, in charge of a Sussex church twenty years ago, and a very scholarly German lady held a Unitarian pastorate at Nottingham a little later. Miss Maude Royden's great popularity has given a fillip to the woman in the pulpit movement, and women students are making their way in steadily increasing numbers into the Free Church theological colleges, especially in London. It is curious that the opposition to women in the pulpit comes mainly from women. I find many women have an instinctive prejudice against women speakers. I remember Miss Frances Willard saying that she had to encounter this prejudice in the 'nineties. Miss Willard was one of the best woman speakers I have heard. She was a natural orator, had a beautiful voice, the face of a saint, and a certain occasional pungency of phrase that always "got there." Her remark that "the worst of women is that they are not gentlemen" is a classic. The late Miss Mary McArthur had a polished grace that captivated her hearers, and Mrs. Philip Snowden has every art and trick of oratory at her command; but of all the women speakers I have heard Miss Margaret Bondfield is the most effective. Her oratory is artless, but she has natural style, real passion, and she gets *au rapport* with a large audience from her first sentence. If the deep religious dynamic that moves her does not find expression in her actual words, her hearers somehow feel that it is there, giving reality to her pas-

sionate humanitarianism. Miss Bondfield is to my mind the finest orator the Labour movement has produced, and if ever she gets into Parliament she ought to be able to sway the House of Commons. Another very great woman speaker—though she seeks no popularity—is Mrs. Bramwell Booth of the Salvation Army. Her gift of speech is a natural endowment, and what carries conviction to her hearers is her own conquering sincerity.

I am often puzzled to account for the “run” that a particular text seems to enjoy for a period, but I have often noted this peculiar phenomenon. Some years ago a Congregational church in the Midlands had six preachers in its pulpit on six successive Sundays, and four of the ministers preached on “the second mile.” One Sunday in the same church I heard two preachers—one in the morning and the other in the evening—preach on “O that I knew where I should find Him.” Quite recently on successive Sundays two preachers discoursed on “As the hart panteth after the water brooks.” But I could cite a dozen instances of these inexplicable runs on texts. The text “As the hart panteth” recalls a story of an Armenian student at New College who, in sermon class, took that text. He rendered it “As the heart pants after the water brooks,” and in announcing his divisions said he wished to speak (1) on the pants of the Psalmist, (2) on pants in general, and (3) on some Free Church pants.

Of all preachers I ever heard, Dr. James Stalker is the one whose sermons fasten themselves most indelibly on my mind. I can remember quite distinctly the whole argument of the sermon he preached when I first heard him nearly thirty years ago. Since then I have heard him only twice, but I remember those two sermons vividly still. The explanation is simple. Dr. Stalker has a wonderful gift for divisions. And when he has set out his divisions



they are fixed in his hearers' minds. Take as an example his treatment of temptation. As regards temptation, all men, he says, are divisible into five groups, like Continental political parties. In the "centre" are the tempted; on the "left centre" the tempted who have fallen; on the "left" the tempted who have fallen and are tempting others; on the "right centre" are the tempted who have resisted their temptation; on the "right" are the tempted who have resisted temptation and are helping others to resist their temptations. We are all of us in one of the categories. Which? A sermon like that is quite unforgettable.

Humour seldom crept into the melancholy Tribunal Courts that administered the Compulsory Service Act during the war. I only heard of one case. A conscientious objector who had done three terms of imprisonment in Wormwood Scrubbs, appeared for the fourth time. The chairman, who thought the man's objection was really conscientious (and, as such, a title to exemption), tried to persuade him to do some non-combatant work in the army. "We do not want to send you back to Wormwood Scrubbs," he said. "Won't you go to France for, say, clerical or labour duty?"

"No, sir," replied the C.O. with adamant firmness, "I prefer the Wormwood to the Gaul!"

A tribunal with a sense of humour would have let him off.

The printer's devil has never really been given his due. Nowadays he is often a girl, for the piquant little imps who carried "copy" from the editorial office to the printing office have been lured by higher wages into fresh woods and pastures new. As a combination of perky impudence and sheer ignorance the old-time printer's devil was *sui generis*. I remember one bright spark of a lad of sixteen



who thirty years ago used to collect my morning's copy at House of Commons' Committees, and dispatch it by the afternoon train to Manchester. One morning I had an engagement at Westminster Abbey, and this boy was sent there to get my copy. I waited for him, but as he did not arrive I set off to take my own copy to Fleet Street. A little way from the Abbey I met the boy wandering aimlessly about Parliament Street. He told me that he "didn't know where Westminster Abbey was"; as we rode on an omnibus through the Strand he nudged my arm and, pointing across the road, said: "There's Short's." He didn't know where Westminster Abbey was, but he wanted me to understand that he knew the famous old wineshop.

My own memory occasionally plays me tricks, but it has never let me down so dismally as that of a Quaker gentleman I meet occasionally, who knew John Bright intimately, and, as a boy, often went walks with the great Victorian orator. Once as they passed the Crimean monument together John Bright stopped to read the inscription—his own undying words. "The angel of death is hovering over the land; almost I can hear the beating of his wings." John Bright told his young companion how the idea of the beating of the wings came to him through reading the lines of an American poet. But the boy *forgot the name of the poet*, and has never been able to recall to whom John Bright said he owed his inspiration. Could it have been William Cullen Bryant's "To a Waterfowl"?

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### A GREAT ORGANIZER

I DO not even qualify the word great in applying it to the Rev. Thomas Law. As an organizing secretary he was really and truly great. When the Free Church Council came to birth at Manchester in 1893 Thomas Law was an obscure Free Methodist minister at Bradford, who had worked out a novel scheme of Free Church parishes and made the scheme work. He was appointed organizing secretary of the new Free Church federation movement. Dr. Mackennal was the responsible secretary and was to be the real leader of the federation. Law was merely expected to do the clerical work and the rough spade-work of organizing. But he had a marshal's baton in his knapsack, and in a year or two he was really the pivotal figure of the whole movement. He had ideas and could bring them into action. Some of them were grandiose, and he had almost a pitiable faith in mass meetings and resolutions. But for all that he kept the Council busy with schemes which brought the scattered forces of Nonconformity into something like a solid phalanx. A little pomposity of manner—which did not reflect any real pretentiousness of mind, or spirit—helped Thomas Law to make a strong impression in unexpected quarters. He found a way into Government departments and whips' rooms—through doors usually very closely guarded—and under his fostering care the Free Church Council (which was never as strong in the provincial areas as Law represented it to be) became a formidable focus of Nonconformist opinion. After Law's death, but not till then, it was real-



ized that he was the *deus ex machina*, for with Thomas Law withdrawn the momentum of the movement swiftly spent itself and its vigour has not yet even been completely regained.

Thomas Law's life was almost as tragic as his death. He consistently overworked for years, and did so when his bad health was crying to him to rest and recuperate. A digestive malady gave him constant and acute pain and robbed him of sleep. Drugs were prescribed him and he came to rely upon them to keep him going. Then neurasthenia claimed him as a victim. An enforced rest at Margate, where he stayed for months alone—and of all things on earth Thomas Law hated solitariness—did him some physical good but depressed him mentally. He returned to his work but collapsed again, flew to the old drug for relief, only to find that its efficacy was gone. Then it was broken to him, none too gently, that he would have to resign his secretaryship. The thought of living without the Free Church Council, which was the life of his life, was unendurable. I knew him intimately all through his association with the Free Church Council—I was present at its inauguration. I travelled hundreds of miles with him, stayed with him at the same hotels and lunched with him two or three days a week for years. I never saw him touch alcohol. He was uncharitably judged himself, but I never knew a man more charitable in his own judgments of others. He found some excuse for saying a good word for everybody. Nothing delighted him more than to give a promising youngster an opportunity to win distinction. He used to say in his somewhat bumptious way that he had given dozens of men an opportunity to make “national reputations”; but he appreciated the joke when some of us went to him once and gravely suggested that he should organize a mass meeting of Free Church leaders in the Albert Hall, to be addressed by himself on “How I made you all.” His well of human kindness overflowed. I



shall always cherish his memory as a man who fought hard against fearful odds.

What saved Thomas Law from the wounds that some of his enemies would have inflicted upon him was a certain pachydermatous imperturbability. It was not that he was insensitive, but that he would not show any sensitiveness. Really he rather enjoyed being "ragged" by his intimates—as if to prove that his pomposity did come off. I once, I am afraid, hurt him for the moment, though he was all forgiveness in five minutes. I had been with him one night to West Ham to hear Gipsy Smith tell the story of his life. Law had a front seat on the platform, and when Gipsy described the episode of his mother's death, Law, who was very susceptible to pathos, drew a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his eyes, though he had heard Gipsy tell the story time and time again. At the end of the same week we were together in the Midlands at a Free Church meeting when Sir Joseph Compton Rickett (then treasurer of the Free Church Council) made a speech, and with the somewhat heavy-footed humour that he affected asked if it was not better to be damned than to be dammed up. Law, sitting in the front row of the platform, laughed uproariously and helped the meeting to see that it was a joke. After the meeting a little group of us had supper together. Conversation turned on Sir Joseph Compton Rickett's *mot* and Law's heroic service in making the joke apparent. I described with rather cruel exaggeration how Law earlier in the week had led the weeping at Gipsy Smith's lecture, and then turning to Law, I added, "It's all right as long as you never mix these things up, Law; but if ever you do the right thing—laugh at Gipsy Smith's pathos and cry over Compton Rickett's humour, you'll lose your job as secretary of the National Free Church Council." Poor Thomas Law's reign did not end quite that way, though both men had a hand in forcing his abdication.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE DECAY OF DISSENT

THE younger generations of Free Churchmen have, I am afraid, forgotten—if, indeed, they have ever heard—the very name of Mr. J. Carvell Williams; but they owe some of their liberties to this plain, rather odd man, who was secretary of the Liberation Society for many years and an M.P. in two Parliaments. Mr. Carvell Williams had an encyclopædic knowledge of ecclesiastical law and history, and as he sat in his dusty office in Sergeants' Inn surrounded by legal tomes, I always thought that there was something harmoniously fusty in his own appearance. He was very deaf, and had a harsh voice, and a harsher cough. To anyone not knowing him he must have presented a rather forbidding appearance, but, in reality, he was a very genial and gentle soul, condemned by his principles to wage ceaseless war against bishops and ecclesiastics in the interests of religious liberty. He was a poor man, and when a national Nonconformist testimonial was raised for him he drew the money—on account—as it came in. When the public presentation was actually made a cheque for the total amount raised was given to him, but the next day he exchanged that cheque for the balance that had been left unpaid to him. There used to be a story afloat in Fleet Street of a sporting man for whom his racing friends got up a testimonial. Someone was commissioned to ask him in what form it would be most acceptable. “Oh, give me something,” he said, “that will pawn for three or four hundred.” It is part of the etiquette of receiving a testimonial to feign astonishment; but I fancy the occasions are



very few when the surprise is really genuine. I knew of a minister who canvassed for his own farewell testimonial when he was leaving a provincial town, and having decided himself that it should take the shape of a gold watch he composed the inscription to be engraved on the case. Testimonials are apt to be overdone nowadays, and I believe the Brotherhood movement has set its face against the practice.

The late Mr. John Lobb was a power in London when I first knew Fleet Street. He was a Common Councillor of the City of London, a member of the School Board, editor and proprietor of the *Christian Age* (now defunct, but then a prosperous religious weekly), and a man who carried weight in the world of philanthropy, education, civic politics and organized Christianity. He was a member of the Press Club for many years, and cultivated a "hail fellow well met" manner with all his fellow-members. At that time he was a wealthy man, living in expensive style, and rather disposed to talk about it. Later, somehow, he lost his money and got mixed up in company promoting with rather dubious coadjutors. I lost sight of him for some years, and then met him one Sunday dressed in funereal black with a silk hat and black gloves—looking for all the world like one of Charles Dickens's spiteful caricatures of a dissenting minister. He told me he was living in a maisonnette on the edge of Tooting Bec Common. "We've only four rooms," he said, "but I've never been so happy—nor has my wife. We've found out that there is nothing in great possessions." He had been bitten with spiritualism, and would talk of what he called the "materializations" he had seen at séances. He showed me a photograph of himself with the "ghost" of Dan Leno looking over his shoulder. Later I used to meet him on Sunday mornings, always in sepulchral black, making his way to a "Kosmon Temple"—a little tin tabernacle in a



weedy garden off the Balham High Road. He always looked very contented, and never sighed for the old days "when he ran his own six horses." I remember John Lobb telling me of a visit he paid to Dan Leno when that famous low comedian was eking out his life in Colney Hatch Asylum. Lobb asked poor Leno if the clock in the visitors' room was right. Leno said it was, and then sidling up to Lobb he added in a very confidential whisper: "And it's the only d——d thing in this place that is right." John Lobb's own end was lonely and sad. He died in Wandsworth Workhouse Infirmary. He had started life as a Ragged School lad in East London. Poverty—riches—poverty was his life course.

Since 1890 many age-long Nonconformist disabilities have been removed; but with each successive release from a grievance the Free Churches seem also to have lost some vitality. The old dissidence loses zest as dissent ceases to carry penalties. It is an historic truism that ideal causes thrive on persecution. Any sort of a crusade begins to be taken seriously when someone has thought it worth while to suffer for it. That is why the Pankhursts got women the vote, while Mrs. Fawcett would have gone on whistling for the franchise for another thirty years. In the nineteenth century Nonconformity thrived on its negative phases. To-day the Free Churches, with fewer reasons for public protest and political action against disabilities, have to develop their positive phases. So the Nonconformist has to become the Free Churchman. From fighting against grievances he turns to glorying in his freedom. This necessary transition has changed, or is rapidly changing, the entire *ethos* of the Free Churches. There is room for a good book on the function of revolt.

Nothing, I think, indexes so exactly the change in Nonconformist thought and feeling within the last thirty

years as the attitude of Free Churchmen to-day towards the Cecil family. Thirty years ago Lord Salisbury was a *bête noir* to Nonconformists. They felt that he was contemptuous of them, and in their eyes he was the feudal tyrant who kept Methodists in Hatfield worshipping in a stable because he would not allow them to buy or lease a site for a Wesleyan chapel on his estate. Mr. Arthur Balfour sustained the Cecilian traditional attitude towards Nonconformists, and provoked them to a white heat of anger by his Education Acts. They felt that he held them in derision, and I imagine they were not far wrong. But now Lord Robert Cecil and Lord Hugh Cecil have warm admirers by the thousand in the Free Churches. Just as Victorian Nonconformists found an idol in Mr. Gladstone because he carried moral passion into politics, so modern Free Churchmen see in the Cecil brothers the embodiment of righteousness applied to public affairs. The new generations of Free Churchmen have lost touch with the older Nonconformity. They are unconcerned about matters like Disestablishment and Disendowment and minor questions of ecclesiastical drapery and millinery: but are very deeply concerned about having the mind and spirit of Christ applied to political, social and economic conditions. And they recognize in the Cecils the will to make this application seriously and at any cost.

A most spectacular demonstration of the speed with which such changes come occurred when Lord Hugh Cecil accepted an invitation to address the Protestant Dissenting Deputies in the Memorial Hall on the League of Nations. As I sat in the library of that hall (erected as a memorial to the Dissenting clergymen who in 1662 left their parishes and went out into the wilderness in protest against the Act of Uniformity), amidst the descendants of the Deputies of the three Dissenting denominations (Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian) who from the time of William and Mary have had right of access to the Throne in defence of



Nonconformist civil liberties, hearing Lord Hugh Cecil speak from a platform behind which were stained-glass windows commemorating the martyrdoms inflicted on Dissenters by his own ancestors, the sense of the topsy-turvydom of it all was all-pervading; yet, at the end of the address, one of the secretaries of the Deputies drew loud applause from that gathering of Free Churchmen when with obvious sincerity he said: "We all *love* Lord Hugh Cecil." And it came almost as a shock to one's historic sense when Lord Hugh, also speaking with evident sincerity, thanked God that the old and bitter animosities of our forefathers have been pushed behind us, and have given place to a real sense of brotherhood and fellowship between all who worship the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

A little incident that occurred on the day Lord Hugh Cecil addressed the Dissenting Deputies lingers in my mind. I was walking up the staircase of the Memorial Hall when a lady stopped me to ask if I thought she might attend the meeting, though she was not a Dissenting Deputy. She was, she said, Lord Hugh Cecil's private secretary, and she had so few opportunities of hearing him speak that if she could gain admittance she would think it was a privilege. My good friend, Mr. A. J. Shephard, secretary of the Deputies, to whom I applied, welcomed the lady into the library. That a public man's private secretary should go to such trouble to hear him speak implies such a tribute to the man's qualities of character that I think the episode is worth recording.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### DISILLUSIONMENTS

EVERY man, I imagine, can fix the date and occasion of his first great disillusionment. Mine came when I was a boy of nine, and every detail is burnt upon my memory. At my day school in a Lancashire town the boys had a mad craze one year for one particular form of sweets. All our pocket money went on a sort of sherbet, which we ate dry with a spoon, and which was called "Kali." It was sold in little flat wooden boxes, and there were several varieties—lemon, orange, pineapple, etc. Opinions varied enormously as to the merits of the various kinds. One boy swore by lemon Kali, while another cared for nothing but orange Kali, and a third vowed that all other varieties were simply uneatable offal compared with pineapple Kali. We quarrelled, and almost came to blows, over the relative merits of these Kalis. We formed groups of orange Kali boys, and felt bitterly towards the avowed champions of lemon and pineapple Kali. In fact, we elevated the Kalis into party issues. The summer holidays came when these differences of opinion were at a height, and I went to visit relatives in an East Lancashire town. While there I had the supreme joy of being taken over the sweet factory where the Kalis were made. On my round of the factory I entered a room where four girls in white overalls were filling the flat wooden boxes, already labelled, with the toothsome powder. There was a mountainous pile of it on a huge round table. I looked at the boxes. They bore coloured labels—yellow for lemon Kali, red for orange

Kali, and green for pineapple Kali, but all the boxes were being filled from the same pile. Aghast, I asked one girl if a horrible mistake was not being made. "Aren't you putting orange Kali in a lemon Kali box?" I asked in a tone that must have sounded horror-struck. "Oh, no," she said, "there's no difference in the Kali—it is only in the labels on the boxes." I left the factory a sadly disillusioned boy.

In the years that have fled since that first rude shock to my boyish faith I have often recalled the scene and my own sinking feelings, whenever any of my swans have turned out geese, or any of my idols have betrayed their feet of clay. "It is only the labels that are different" I have often thought when party politicians I trusted acted as I imagined that only their opponents could have done in similar circumstances. The cynical reflection, "A difference in the labels only," has occurred to me when I have found that working for pagans and working for professed Christians so often involves no difference in their treatment of their employees. It is not mere cynicism that leads me to revive my first disillusionment whenever a fresh disillusionment comes upon me. In politics as well as in religion the struggle of the immediate future must be a fight for reality or—in the after-war sag when we have all eaten our direction labels—both Church and party shibboleths will be ignored by the multitude, or despised as a mere matter of labels signifying no essential differences.

Already the working classes are contemptuous about churches and suspicious about party politics. I once heard a soul-embittered working man say a very savage thing. He declared that all through the industrial age there had been two methods adopted by employers and capitalists to prevent the workers from demanding their full rights. One was to provide all possible facilities for the workmen to dope themselves with beer; the other was to offer them



evangelical religion to make them forget their woes in this life by dwelling on the good time coming to them in the next world. Both schemes, he said, had worked. But, he said, quoting Lincoln, "You can't fool all the people all the time," and the working man now sees the folly of drinking and has done with churches.

The little girl who prayed that the bad people might be made good and the good people made nice unconsciously probed the very heart of a tremendous problem—that of making goodness attractive. Dr. C. A. Berry had a great sermon on mischievous goodness. James Hinton used to say that he "felt suffocated near the so-called good people, who so often are meagre in sympathy or maggoty in intellect." There are saints who make one want to swear. To make virtue attractive is one of the tasks to which the churches have never honestly applied themselves. Dr. Woods Hutchinson has said that virtues seem sometimes as dangerous as vices if not indulged in with strict moderation. Life, as J. H. Shorthouse put it, is one of the finest of the fine arts; but some Christian people have a fatal habit of making life joyless. Mr. Bernard Snell quite shocked some Free Church people by saying that there was often more genuine fellowship in a village public house than in a church. Laurence Housman meant the same thing when he declared that

Ale does more than Milton can  
To justify God's ways to man.

The early Church was a fellowship, but some modern churches are refrigerators.

Why is it, I wonder, that so few public speakers have pleasing voices? I have been asking myself this question for thirty years, and the answer evades me. Oliver Wendell Holmes, I think, says that Heaven gives us all



our other features, but we make our own mouths. We make our own voices, too, in a very large measure. Sainte Beuve says that one always has the voice of one's mind—which may be true, though it is so hard on Sir Hamar Greenwood that I never like to believe the dictum. Very few actors have unpleasant voices, and fewer still produce their voices badly. Yet in the pulpit and on the platform hardly one voice in ten is really pleasant, and not one in a hundred is produced well. The best platform voice I can remember (I never heard John Bright in his prime) was the Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell's. A musical journalist whom I knew, never heard Hirst Hollowell without saying, "This man ought to be singing in grand opera." Dr. Hensley Henson has also a very beautiful voice, and I have never heard any speaker make English words sound so exquisite. Mr. Spurgeon's voice was lovely; even when he shouted it was musical. Mr. Silvester Horne had a beautiful voice in his early Kensington days, but he tore it to rags by shouting, and it grew harsh in his later years. Mr. Lloyd George's voice is a great factor in his wizardry, but he too has overworked it, and it is often hoarse nowadays. Mr. Asquith's voice is hard, but clear. Mr. Chamberlain's voice had a clarion note. Dr. Parker's voice was deep and thick, and, when he raised it, it was unpleasant. To hear him shout the word "murder"—and he always shouted it—was horrible. Dr. R. F. Horton has a silken quality in his voice tones. He could make the repetition of the alphabet sound pathetic. If he had not used it so skilfully, Dr. R. J. Campbell's feeble voice would never have been heard in even a moderate sized building. Dr. J. H. Jowett has a wonderful range of tone in his voice, and no art of voice production has been neglected by him. The oddest voice I can recall is Mr. Chesterton's. It is a thin squeak, and coming from so ponderous a man makes its thinness more conspicuous. He says himself that his voice is the original mouse to

which the mountain gave birth. Dr. Orchard's voice has a distinctly Cockney twang. Dr. Campbell Morgan's voice is glorious in range and timbre, and I always thought he read the Bible better than anyone I have ever heard. Dr. Alexander McLaren had a voice so exquisitely modulated that one forgot his Scotch accent.

The methods of voice production that suit the stage do not necessarily suit the pulpit. And the most irritating voices in the pulpit are those fashioned on the lines of professional elocutionists. Actors and elocutionists necessarily train their voices for the purpose of personating characters other than themselves. But the preacher's voice must be his own, and the slightest suggestion of the theatre is obnoxious. All that the preacher can learn from the actor is the trick of making himself heard from the beginning to the end of every sentence. The vast majority of preachers fail to do even that.

After a well-known London actress had given a recitation in a northern town a critical hearer remarked to a friend that every now and then he caught a vulgar tone in her voice. "It's not in her voice, my dear fellow," his friend made reply, "it's in her soul." I have often heard that flaw in the soul come out in a preacher's voice.

The custom of devoting a section of every Sunday morning service to children puts an intolerable strain on many ministers. I imagine that preparing a new children's address each week plagues preachers far more than writing two new sermons. The gift of talking to children is unequally bestowed, and to find suitable stories to tell from the pulpit week by week is evidently a sorry burden. Occasionally one story seems to have a "run" all over the country. Some time ago, when the church I attend was without a minister for about a year, we had a procession of "supply" preachers through the pulpit. One after another told, as a children's address,



a story about a little boy who presented his mother with a bill for 2s. 6d. setting out the charges for running errands, chopping wood, cleaning knives and other odd chores. The mother paid the 2s. 6d., but along with the cash presented her bill—"for caring for Fred for nine years, feeding him, clothing him, nursing him, taking him on holidays, etc., £0 os. od." It was quite a nice little moral story, and on first hearing was very effective. But as one "supply" preacher after another told the story its lustre dimmed, and at last we found it interesting to watch for variations in the items in the boy's bill. Eventually, when a good friend of my own, Rev. J. G—, supplied the pulpit, and began his children's address with the threadbare tale, there were smiles all over the church. Next day I met J. G. in a restaurant, and congratulated him on his children's address. He seemed pleased. Then I added, "Well, I'll put it this way—of all the ten men who have told that story from our pulpit in the last twelve months, you told it the best."

J. G.'s unfailing sense of humour was equal to the occasion, and he told me of an experience he had in Yorkshire. He had been at a ministers' "retreat," and someone told a story of a little girl who prayed that her brother should not catch any sparrows in a brick trap he had set up in the garden, and then having prayed, she went out into the garden and kicked the trap to smithereens to make doubly sure. A few days afterwards J. G. was presiding at a meeting in a Yorkshire town and garnished his speech from the chair with that story. It went very well, and vastly amused the meeting. Another minister (who had not arrived in time to hear the chairman) told the same story half-way through the meeting. This time it tickled the audience immensely. The final speaker of the evening was a minister who arrived at the last moment (he had come on from another meeting). He announced that he had no time for a speech, but he did want to tell



a story which contained all he needed to say. And he, too, started to tell that story of the prayerful little girl and her brother's brick trap. This time the audience was simply screaming. Every sentence in the story drew uproarious cheers. The minister who was speaking was puzzled. His expression seemed to say, "Well, I thought this was a good story, but I did not think it would cause all this wild hilarity." He learned the truth when he sat down. A blunt Yorkshire layman, sitting on the next chair, whispered, "Tha's the third chap as 'as tow'd that tale to-night."

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### LONDON'S SPELL

LONDON has improved vastly as a city during my acquaintance with it. Holywell Street and the slum region behind it have been swept away to be replaced by Kingsway and Aldwych, while the mean streets and shabby shops around Parliament Square have gone for good, and the unsavoury area around Seven Dials has become quite respectable. I spent many a happy hour hunting in the twopenny boxes outside the second-hand bookshops in Holywell Street. I never lighted upon a real bargain, beyond an old calf-bound edition of Gifford's "Juvenal" and a choice little copy of Sterne's "Sentimental Journey"; but I made the beginnings of a small library out of the twopenny boxes. I miss the Holywell Street bookshops, but the beauty of the Gaiety Theatre, built on the old site, is compensation for the disappearance. "The Gaiety" is one of the modern London buildings I admire most. I believe London owes the splendour of that building to Mr. John Burns.

When the London County Council demolished the old Gaiety it paid compensation to the directors in a lump sum. The directors had plans prepared for a new Gaiety, quite unpretentious in design. The L.C.C. commissioned Mr. Norman Shaw to prepare an alternative design—the present design, in fact—but the Gaiety directors objected to the enhanced cost which adoption of this design would involve. I believe it was a matter of £80,000. The County Council sought the sanction of Mr. John Burns, who was then President of the Local

Government Board, to incur this additional expenditure out of public funds. Mr. Burns could not sanction the expenditure, but, putting a blind eye to the telescope, he hinted that the County Council would not have to submit its account to L.G.B. audit. Taking the risk, the County Council paid the extra cost of the superior architectural design. The style of the Gaiety Theatre set an exalted standard for all the buildings on Kingsway and Aldwych, and immeasurably increased the assessment value of the whole area. So the extra expenditure on the Gaiety Theatre has been recouped over and over again to the London ratepayers.

The first time I saw Mr. John Burns he was being dragged by his trouser-leg off the plinth of one of the Landseer lions at a Trafalgar Square labour demonstration. He was a fiery radical agitator then; since then he has been a Cabinet Minister with £5,000 a year, and now he is a cautious Liberal—quite on the right wing of Liberalism—and a Privy Councillor, and—well, “life is a comedy for those who think.” Has he changed, or has Liberal opinion run in front of him? I always lose patience when I hear people complain that John Burns is egotistical. My invariable retort is that he has some right to be. Besides, his egotism is so engagingly ingenuous. I love to hear John Burns talk about London (who will ever improve on his remark to a Canadian who was comparing the Thames at Westminster invidiously with the Ottawa River: “Oh, but the Thames is not a river,” said Burns, “it’s liquid history”), and I like to hear him talk about himself. I remember him overtaking a friend and myself as we left the National Liberal Club one day soon after Mr. Burns had attained Cabinet rank. “If you’re going to Fleet Street,” he said, “I’ll come with you. I’m going to Chancery Lane.” Then he added: “I’m going to pay the penalty of greatness.” “Oh,” I rejoined, “in what way?” “I’m going to Edes to pay for the robe in which I am to



take my LL.D. at Liverpool University next week." "I saw they were conferring a degree on you," I answered. "Is it for your Local Government administration, or for your Lees Raper Lecture?" "I think it is for my Local Government work; but"—turning swiftly upon me—"what do you know about my Lees Raper Lecture?" "Well," I answered, "I've read it, and I think it is a very weighty contribution to the literature of the liquor question." Mr. Burns thanked me and we walked on, chatting about things in general, till my friend parted from us at Middle Temple Lane, where we turned towards Fleet Street. Then Mr. Burns said: "It was very kind of you to say what you did about my Lees Raper Lecture." "I certainly meant it and did not say it as a mere compliment. I've read the lecture twice, and it was a good piece of work. I did not hear it delivered, but——" "Oh," he burst in, "but you *should* have heard it delivered; it was magnificently delivered. I threw all my weight into its delivery." Egotistical! of course it was egotistical, but the daylight frankness of it silences criticism.

Mr. John Burns was one of the five Cabinet Ministers who stood out against the war at the end of July, 1914. Lord Morley, Mr. Harcourt, Sir John Simon and Mr. Lloyd George were the others who tendered their resignations. Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Hugh Edwards says in his biography (the proofs of which Mr. Lloyd George passed), had put his resignation on paper to hand to Mr. Asquith. At the eleventh hour he was converted to the war by sitting at a dinner party next to the Belgian Ambassador, who told him how implicitly Belgium was relying on England to sustain her treaty obligations to preserve Belgian integrity. Mr. Lloyd George tore up his resignation that night. Next morning Mr. John Burns and Lord Morley were not asked to withdraw their resignations; but the other dissenting Cabinet Ministers were urged to retain office, and did so. On the day war was declared John

Burns wrote in his diary, "War declared—ultimate results : Conscription, Protection and Militarism in England."

When the Balkan war was raging I was sitting reading the *Westminster Gazette* in the cosy basement of Evans's tea shop at the Piccadilly corner of Bond Street one afternoon, when a tall, grey-bearded gentleman, with very grave eyes, asked if he might glance at the "stop-press" war-news in my paper. I passed the *Westminster* across, and my *vis-à-vis* looked at it earnestly and handed it back with the remark: "This war is peculiarly interesting to me; I know every inch of the ground they are fighting over." We discussed the war and the political situation it was creating; and then the old gentleman told me that he was a martyr to neuralgia which never left him and scarcely ever allowed him to sleep. "I endure it for weeks," he said, "then I feel I must have an outburst or I shall go mad. So I sit down and write a stinging letter about something to the *Times*. I dare say you have seen my letters; I am Sir Henry Haworth."

Rev. Andrew Mearns, who was the secretary of the London Congregational Union for many years, was the minister of a church at Chelsea when he settled first in London. Thomas Carlyle was living at Chelsea in those days. Mr. Mearns told me that he used sometimes to see Carlyle open the door of his house in Cheyne Walk late at night and put something on the doorstep. Mr. Mearns went back one night to see what it was, and found it was a clay pipe. Carlyle made it a habit when he finished his last pipe at night to fill it with tobacco and put it on the doorstep for the night watchman to pick up and smoke on his rounds. Mr. Mearns leapt into fame by his booklet, "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London." It created a tremendous sensation and made slumming fashionable in the early 'eighties. Another Congregational minister



claimed the actual authorship of the famous brochure; but the real fact was that Mr. Mearns provided the title, the ideas and the facts. The other minister was the "literary ghost."

Dr. Scott Lidgett, who leads the Progressive party on the London County Council, edits the *Contemporary Review*, runs a social settlement in Bermondsey, and is the friend of all good causes, shares with me a passionate love of the Surrey hills. For some years he spent his summer holiday at a remote farm at Abinger Bottom, a mile or so above Friday Street, where it has been my good fortune to have a cottage for some years. We often meet in the pine woods on Leith Hill or among the glorious beeches at Wotton. During the last summer of the war there was a scarcity of beer in the Surrey hills and the harvesters were in despair. A small boy of mine and I were constantly pulled up in the evenings by weary-looking old men in quest of ale. "Could you tell me," they would ask, "if they've got any beer at the Stephan Langton in Friday Street?" One evening as we were walking down a woodland path we saw an elderly man in a well-worn straw hat trudging down the hill towards us. "Here's another of those old men who want to know if they've any beer at the Stephan Langton," said my small boy. "Hush!" I said. "That's an ex-president of the National Free Church Council."



## CHAPTER XL

### TUMULT AND PEACE

SOME memories never fade, and I cannot imagine that I shall ever forget that wild Saturday night at the National Liberal Club in January, 1906, when the news of the Liberal triumphs at the polls was declared in the crowded smoke-room, and when Liberals, after twenty years without power and eleven years out of office, saw Tory strongholds topple and fall like European thrones fell in 1918. Mr. H. G. Wells was in the same group as myself on that great night in the N.L.C. when the Manchester victories were announced by the old secretary, Mr. Donald Murray, who for once failed utterly to sustain his dour Scottish restraint. But Mr. Wells, who describes the occasion in "The New Machiavelli," carried away from that memorable scene a whole sheaf of data that escaped my observation. I remembered little beyond that giddy climacteric moment when the cry "Balfour is out" came creeping down the smoke-room, and when two thousand men went mad in one delirium of concerted joy. For ten minutes the excitement was riotous, and Donald Murray, figures in hand, found that his shrillest whistle was unheard over the pandemonium. When silence was restored I found myself standing on a copper-topped coffee table, voiceless from unconscious shouting. But Mr. Wells had evidently kept cool and observant. He must have been in it all but not of it.

One of my memories of that evening at the N.L.C. was of meeting Sir Percy Bunting, editor of the *Contemporary Review*, on the staircase. Sir Percy was not exactly phlegmatic, but, as a rule, he was the most

restrained and precise of men. I always wondered if he had ever been guilty of an emotion. But I saw another Sir Percy Bunting that night. Even he had shed his impenetrable calm. His lips were quivering and he trembled with excitement. He had a glass of something—it was not milk—in his hand, and as he talked he was sprinkling the contents of the glass over the boots of the men who stood near him. “A wonderful night; a most memorable night,” he stammered in his excitement. We agreed, raised three more cheers for Winston Churchill, and hurried off to fight for our hats and coats at the cloak-room.

Then come drear memories of a December night, very different, in the same club—though not in the same club house—twelve years later when the Liberal débâcle of 1918 wiped out recollections of the Liberal triumphs of 1906. The scene was changed, indeed. Even the setting was different. Instead of the gorgeous great smoke-room of the Whitehall Place club-house members of the N.L.C. met in the dingy ground-floor room of the Westminster Palace Hotel. Old Donald Murray had gone to his last long rest. Moreover, the club was a house divided against itself, for among the groups awaiting the news from the ballots were clusters of Liberal Coalitionists who raised cheers when Mr. Asquith’s defeat in East Fife was declared and applauded when old-time Liberal citadels fell into Tory hands. The gloom that fell on the club that night was impenetrably thick. Old Liberals who had tasted defeat as well as victory in the past crept out of the club into the darkness of Victoria Street with bowed heads and sad hearts. Lloyd George’s name was hissed, though from his portrait in the place of honour over the fireplace his face beamed smilingly upon the assembly of which he had been the idol but a few years before. In the hall John Burns stood talking to a group of abject souls. “It is what you might have expected,” I overheard him say. “War and Liberalism never can run in double harness.”



Journalism is a life of fret and fume—even in its backwaters. The glamour of the street of adventure wears off with the years, and a craving for some refuge far from the madding crowd is a feeling shared by most journalists. My favourite retreat from the hustle of Fleet Street is a quiet valley in the Surrey hills where, in a clearing between the woodlands a little lake nestles between “oaks that muse and pines that dream.” From our cottage windows we look down on the water whose surface, responsive as a human face, answers to the gentlest zephyrs of the air, reflects, as in a mirror, the blue of the skies and the lowering of the clouds, and holds the lengthening shadows of the pines as the evening falls. Friday Street, in the days before the *Daily Mail* boomed its beauties and brought the Sunday motorist and even the ubiquitous char-à-banc to disturb its placid life, was a benison to my soul as a city worker. There the crowning sorrow of my life came upon me, and only there, I think sometimes, could I have borne it. I knew there what the Psalmist means when he cries: “I will lift mine eyes to the hills.” There, too, I have learned something of the simple annals of the poor.

Long sojournings in the Surrey hills have given me a profound admiration for the British agricultural labourer. I am almost disposed to think that he is our most highly skilled craftsman. His brain moves slowly, I allow; he is inarticulate and consequently shy with townsmen, and his vocabulary is so limited that he is often incomprehensible. But the things he knows and can do compel my admiration. I have in mind a man, living in a cottage near mine, who has rarely been twenty miles away from his birthplace. But what he does not know about agricultural processes, farm animals, woodlore, fruit culture, flowers, as well as about carpentry, building, and drainage is scarcely worth knowing. His knowledge is encyclopædic. Yet he rarely ventures an opinion except in a diffident way. A



Cockney with half his knowledge would advance a decisive view unhesitatingly on any topic under the sun. Poverty—i.e., the clean poverty of the country, not the sordid poverty of the slum—is not perhaps a bad thing when you are not afraid of it. The real simple life—by which I mean living in a cottage, austere furnished, content to do one's own house and garden work, content even to do the unpleasant sanitary tasks that arise in genuine country cottage life—has its abiding attractions. I can live this life for weeks together without pining for the scurry of Fleet Street or the fleshpots of a West London club. To eat food of one's own growing, to dispense with all hired labour, to trouble the butcher rarely, and to find mental refreshment in the quiet ritual of country life and the wholesome joys of the countryside, this is my own idea of a heaven on earth—always provided that a stream of books is flowing through the house. I find I can even be quite happy without a daily newspaper. Enjoyment of country life must depend on one's inner mental and spiritual resources. And the man who can only appreciate the country in summer is not really a country lover at all.

Just as the war was ending I saw, with a real pang, in the newspapers an intimation of the death of Mr. William Fancett of Maidstone, at the age of 103. I had not seen him for some years, but in the 'nineties I often spent an hour with the wonderful old man, and every Christmas we exchanged greetings. I believe he lived all his years in Maidstone. Born just before the Battle of Waterloo was fought, he lived in five reigns, and his memory was so retentive and his intelligence so fine that a talk with him was like dipping into an anecdotal history of the nineteenth century. He was one of Benjamin Disraeli's workers when Dizzy stood for Maidstone. They stood side by side on the hustings on nomination day. Dizzy, very foppishly dressed, leaned on a gold-headed cane,

imperturbable, amid excitement that came near being riotous. "He *was* a cool customer," William Fancett used to say. Fancett had some queer tales to tell of vote-buying and personation at Maidstone elections—for the Kentish capital was a nest of political corruption in those days. Up to about ninety William Fancett was a lay preacher in the Anglican Church. His vitality was almost incredible. A few years before his death he had cataract on both eyes. Quite calmly he went into Maidstone hospital for an operation, and a month later he was walking about the streets of the old town, quite his old cheerful self. He wrote to me just before he underwent the operation—wrote in white chalk on a huge sheet of brown paper—and he was as cheery as a sandboy. Old age never afflicted him in any way. He carried a walking stick when he was about ninety, but only to swing it. I never remember seeing him use glasses. He ate anything, without a thought of digestive qualms, and enjoyed his pipe to the very end. Of all the grand old men I have known, William Fancett had best learned the art of growing old gracefully. And it is one of the finest of the fine arts.

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